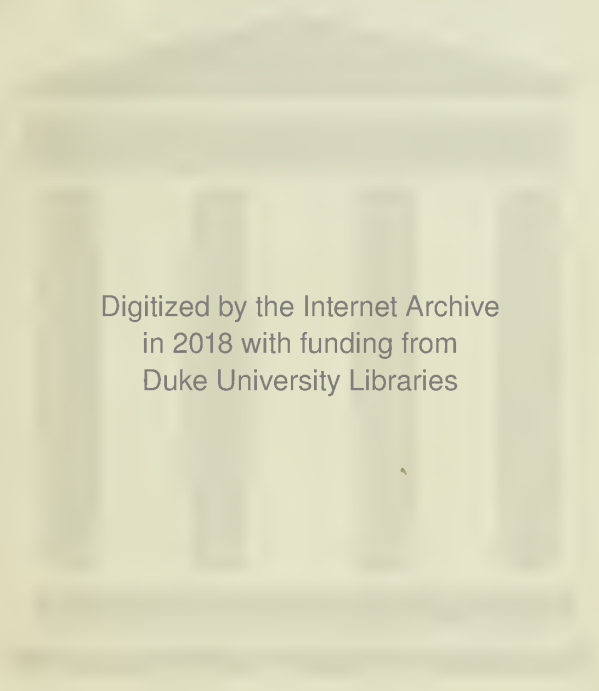




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# THE ROMANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION ;

OR.

## ONE LAST GLIMPSE

OF

CHARLOTTE TEMPLE AND ELIZA WHARTON.

(Charlotte Stanley)

(Elizabeth Wharton)

*A CURIOSITY OF LITERATURE AND LIFE.*

By <sup>Caroline Healey</sup> MRS. DALL,

AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGE, THE MARKET, AND THE COURT," "SUNSHINE,"  
"HISTORICAL SKETCHES RETOUCHEE," ETC.

"In the old age black was not counted fair ;  
Or, if it were, it bore not beauty's name"  
*Shakspeare.*

CAMBRIDGE:

PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

1875.



THE ROMANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS little *brochure* is published by request and by subscription. It is not offered to those who read it as a work of art; not even as a contribution to literature nor as a satisfactory solution of the problem of Eliza Wharton's destiny. A work of art must have been mercilessly shorn of details, and of all indirection that would detract from its climax. A contribution to literature must challenge sympathies broad as the language. A solution of an old mystery must bring justification and proof to every assertion. No one of these things is here attempted.

On the contrary, it was the wish of those for whose pleasure it was written to preserve all the details that would recall hereafter the charmed week at Hartford, although at times these might disguise the thread of the story.

Again, the sympathies to which the story is addressed are limited. The members of the Association present at Hartford, during the last days in August, 1874; a few persons who have heard the manuscript read; and women with good memories in the rural homesteads up and down the Connecticut River,—may be all who will read it with interest.

Why then should it be printed?

For the same reason that Mr. Bigelow tells what he knows of the History of Franklin's manuscript. "The facts here set down if preserved may lead to the discovery of others which will complete the story."

It is impossible to prove Eliza Wharton's marriage here; but it is surely worth while to show that those

who watched by her death-bed fully believed in it as a fact. Nothing short of such a statement could draw the certificate from its hiding-place. Where we find a popular impression, surviving for a century, wrongly based at the beginning and without any foundation in the suspicions of those best cognizant of the facts, justice to the noble men and women who loved the subject of it demands that matters should be put in train for her ultimate justification.

When I had once heard the Shaksperian legends from the believing lips of the last descendant of Abigail Stanley, it was impossible for me to begin my story on this side of the Atlantic. Its roots seemed to me to shoot over the broad waves, as those of a willow sometimes cross a country road to seek a brook. Thomas Stanley, neighbor and acquaintance of William Shakspeare, "of more consequence than most," is a far more attractive person than any man known merely as the first settler of Hartford. When we find him in close company with other men whose names are on the Stratford Register the interest deepens. Little wonder if "Thong Church" should be the last thought and the last boast of the last survivor of Thomas Stanley's sorely tried descendants.

It is well known to genealogists, and indeed to most literary people, that a very exhaustive volume has lately been published on the subject of Shakspeare's descendants. In that volume Shakspeare's nephews, the Harts, are all accounted for. Against the name of one, however, there is no date but that of birth, and against that of another are the decisive words, "dead *sine prole*." For this reason I said, "There is no certainty that the children of Joan Shakspeare died childless because the register is silent," and my words seem to need interpretation.

Our late civil war may make clear some of the incidents of the century in which New England was settled.

Just as Southern slave-holders disinherited a recreant son who had been educated at the North; just as two brothers reared under different influences met each other in the fields of Shiloh or Manasseh, and if they could, crossed swords and passed each other by,—so did the children and the fathers of the first part of the seventeenth century in England. If a Puritan son came to New England with his family, the angry Cavalier left his name standing on the household book a while. If the same man returned in 1640 to take part with Oliver Cromwell, the unhappy father wrote sternly against the name “*dead sine prole* ;” and this fact, not always capable of proof, when encountered at the Herald’s office is one great obstacle to establishing an American pedigree. But Cavaliers die also, and sometimes without children; so the Massachusetts Bay Company, looking forward to the Protectorate or some similar reverse, ordered each one of its emigrants to keep a strict account of the pedigree and increase of his family.

In writing the novel of “Charlotte Temple,” Mrs. Rowson adhered very strictly to her facts. The names of the real actors in her story, and the fact of Charlotte’s connection with the Stanleys, are now put in print for the first time. I delayed the printing of my manuscript for a while, hoping to discover one copy of the first edition of “The Coquette,” and to be able to account for the fact that this work of the imagination was at once accepted as a veritable history. I was not successful, and what little I have been able to gather from the “children’s children” of the author I will state here.

Mrs. Forster was Hannah, daughter of Grant Webster, celebrated in her youth for both wit and beauty. Dr. Forster’s attention was first drawn to her by her political articles in the newspapers. It would be a pleasant picture of the olden time, if I could paint the scene, as the

whole parish at "Little Cambridge" turned out, ceremoniously, to greet his bride when he took her home.

It is believed that the first edition of "The Coquette" was issued about the year 1800, twelve years after Eliza's death. There is little doubt that Mr. Boyer, Major Sanford, and others were characters carefully studied from the life, and immediately recognized; but Mrs. Forster was a woman of vivid imagination, and certainly made no attempt to adhere to the facts of the story, if she had ever known them.

That the tale, as I tell it, seems almost like a bit of autobiography, I am well aware: I make no apology for it. Psychologically the whole train of events forms a curious study; and, when I look back upon it, it amuses me to see how easily a little more of indolence, selfishness, or indifference, on my part, might have altered the whole course of the story. More indolent, I should never have possessed myself of Eliza's letters; more selfish, I should have taken no heed to Mrs. Burton's request; and then, what refreshment, pleasure, and surprise not only I but many others must have missed! None of those who went to Salisbury on the 20th of August, 1874, will ever forget the tremulous excitement which changed for the nonce the "Man of Science" to the "Man of Feeling."

To those accustomed to old letters, Eliza's will seem bright, innocent, and helpful; others may misunderstand them, but to be misunderstood is the risk and the fate of almost every creature.

It has seemed best to preserve the real names of most of the actors in a narrative so privately printed. I trust to the kindness of those whose sharp eyes may pierce the half-worn veil to take no ungenerous advantage of that fact.

CAROLINE H. DALL.

141 WARREN AVENUE, BOSTON,

March 1, 1875.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I REMEMBER that one moist, warm summer morning, when I was a little girl, I wandered into an old orchard before the sun had risen. The air seemed full of loose silver threads, floating and swaying, the aerial clues flung out by adventurous spiders seeking the day's fortune.

Near me was a bare limb of a half-dead apple-tree; and, while I looked and wondered, many of these clues attached themselves to the splitting bark, and the proprietors of these "ropewalks in the air" began to pull their cables in, and to run back and forth, clearing away superfluous knots, yet holding safe the diamond setting of their silver chains.

They were natives of many far-sundered homes: there was the big wood spider, clad in a heavy set of winter furs, first cousin to the tarantula; the spotted mite, terror of nursery beds; the loose-jointed "spinner," full of nursery cares; but, however they looked and whatever they did, each was a deft workman, and kept unsullied the charm of the new-born day.

Why should all those tiny threads have floated to that one branch?

I asked myself again and again, but I could not tell. Perhaps it was because the branch was bare, and had no proper function of its own. Perhaps its purposeless existence left it free, to entertain the vagaries of its many-legged visitors.

For some such reason, it may be, the threads of the following story floated before my asking eyes, and have been gathered into my waiting hand.

Because I would not shake the dew-drops from the web, I tell the story in my proper person.

PART I.—SEPARATION.

“What is your substance, whereof are you made  
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?”  
*53d Sonnet. Shakspeare.*

“If there be nothing new, but that which is  
Hath been before, — how are our brains beguil’d!  
Which, laboring for invention, bear amiss  
The second burthen of a former child.”  
*59th Sonnet.*

## I.

EVERYBODY smiled a little incredulously the other day when I said, innocently enough, that probably we had here in Boston the only portrait of Shakspeare that could be proved to be painted from the life, — the portrait painted by Frederico Zuccherò for the old Globe Tavern.

Before I had time to prove my words, the only remaining personal relic of the great poet followed the picture. The gloves which Garrick received from one of the Harts at Stratford, which he left to his wife as his chief treasure, and which she afterwards gave to Mrs. Siddons, Fanny Kemble — the only woman who ever had a right to wear them — has now sent in friendly sympathy to Horace Furness.

If Betterton had been a little wiser, he might have sought in other places than Stratford for news of the dead poet. There his Puritan relatives felt themselves disgraced by his fame; they hid his

papers, and would not consent to the publication of his immortal plays,—the only reason why we got them first from the stage itself.

The “preacher at New Place,” daintily entertained with the Stratford publicans’ “best ale and sacke,” did his work well; and, gentle and catholic as the singer of Avon might be, there is no doubt that those nearest to him in the world were fanatics in the new faith. Charles Hart, who fought at Edgehill and was the best tragic actor of his time, alone justified the tenderness shown by Shakspeare to the kin of his sister Joan by a just pride in the great plays.

But, in Betterton’s time, there were traces just across the sea.

Before me, as I write, is a picture of Hamlet, copied from one hanging in the Royal Gallery at Copenhagen, which the Danish tradition tells us Shakspeare himself saw before he wrote his play; and very easy to believe this any one will find it who looks at the speculative eyes, undecided mouth, and inky cloak of this portrait, painted in the twelfth century.

It was on this journey also, the Wurtembergers tell us, that Duke Frederick, who had made the acquaintance of Bacon, Raleigh, and Ben Jonson, at Elizabeth’s court, heard of Shakspeare in the Low Countries, and summoned him to Frankfort, hanging a gold chain about the poet’s neck after he had

given Romeo and Juliet in the New Palace, through the broad halls of which a span of horses might have been driven to his chamber door, and where, in the month of May, 1597, he found the first suggestion of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and held a Latin debate with the old schoolmaster whom he was to immortalize as Quarles.

This pretty story is told by those who have been long attached to the ducal court. If Betterton had looked, he might have found its fresh traces.

But it never would have occurred to Betterton to *cross the Atlantic* with Shakspeare's "kinsfolk and acquaintance," nor to Garrick long after; and yet, possibly as late as Garrick's time, such traces might have been found along our own Connecticut River.

Dr. Hall, who married the great poet's favorite daughter, was a Puritan of the "strictest lace," yet so "wise was he in all appertaining to his craft, that the gentry were forced to have him in their straits," wrote Drake, commenting on his posthumous medical work.

Fanatic though Hall might be, he had loved his great father-in-law; for, in that epitaph upon his wife which Dugdale copied, he speaks of her as *like her father* in both wit and piety, and still more in the heart that "wept with all," and was not contented to weep only, but set itself to cheer with "comforts cordiall." Surely, kith and kin, and

brethren in the faith, emigrating from Stratford and its neighborhood, within fourteen years of Shakspeare's death, must sometime have heard the poet's name in the household of "good Mistress Hall" ?

Who, then, were Edmund and Stephen Hart, who crossed the Atlantic in the "John and Mary" in 1634, in company with Thomas Greene and Thomas Stanley, all of whom are found soon after with Hooker at Hartford? Stephen Hart went to Farmington, but on the old maps we find "Hart's Ford" where the modern city stands. These Harts were younger than Shakspeare's nephews; yet, as they were Puritan, there is no certainty that the children of Joan Shakspeare died childless because the register is silent. If of kin to that William Hart who married Joan Shakspeare, might not this very Edmund have been named for the "player" whom the great poet buried so proudly at St. Savior's; and may not Thomas Greene have been the grandson at least of that Thomas who was buried at Stratford, March 6, 1589, — Thomas Greene, alias Shakspeare?

These are not mere idle fancies; for, in the first place, our tale goes back to Shakspeare's time, and, in the next, we know certain things of the Thomas Stanley who came with these men, and went with them to Hartford, which give us leave to entertain these questions.



The answers probably perished, when the old parsonage of Elnathan Whitman, containing the most valuable collection of papers in Connecticut, was burned at Hartford, in 1831; but from these three names are descended many of the most distinguished citizens of that State. The Hookers, the Wadsworths, and the Porters all carry Stanley blood; the Lees are the descendants of Stephen Hart; and the old graveyard still shows the name of Bennet, wife of Thomas Stanley; who was born in 1600.

In Shropshire, not very far away from Stratford, is the old "Thong Church," built on the land which Hengist begged of Vortigern, promising to cover it all with "an ox-hide," which he shrewdly cut into thongs.

There lies the body of Thomas Stanley, second son of the Earl of Derby, beneath an inscription which Dugdale tells us Shakspeare wrote, and indeed when we read in the last line, that —

"Standley, for whom this stands, shall stand in Heaven,"

we seem to recognize the quaint speech, nor did it much astonish me to hear it recited by the last of the direct Stanley line in Hartford the other day, with this information added, —

"This was what John Milton thought of when he wrote his famous epitaph on Shakspeare, for when he sings, —

“What needs my Shakspeare for his honored bones,  
The labor of an age in pilèd stones,  
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid  
Under a star-y-pointing pyramid.”

he merely quotes what Shakspeare had said of Stanley, —

“Not monumental stone preserves our fame,  
Nor star-y-pointing pyramid our name,  
The memory of him for whom this stands  
Shall outlive marble and defacer’s hands.”

It will be seen that “star-y-pointing” has been deftly substituted for “skye-aspiring” in this traditional Connecticut version.

But we must not hurry away from “Thong Church.” Here, soon after “Thomas Stanley” was laid to rest, a daughter of Thomas Harris married William Pierrepont, last Duke of Kingston; and the dust beneath the monumental slabs of that race was to rise again in the *New England* in a form of grace and beauty, which brought poetry into the arid pages of Jonathan Edwards when Sarah Pierrepont was only a child of fourteen, and her family and that of the Stanleys, in the new land, were to work fresh woe for each other.

“Thomas Stanley, of more consequence than most, came to Hartford in 1636,” wrote James Savage years ago.

Stanley had buried a young brother at sea; he brought with him a curious old silver salver and chiselled tea-service which attested his kinship to

that Thomas who called Shakspeare friend. His silver spoons bore the same crest as the old tomb, and proud were the men and fair the women of his line. He was himself one of the Governor's assistants, and died early. It was his great grandson, Nathaniel Stanley, Treasurer of the Colony of Connecticut, who in 1750 gave his daughter Abigail in marriage, at Hartford, to the Rev. Elnathan Whitman, pastor of the Second Church, and one of the Fellows of the Corporation of Yale College, — a man distinguished for scholarly traits, for the love of rare manuscripts and forgotten books, and whose library at the time of its destruction was the envy of many a college.

And here I pause, with the first faint consciousness of what I have undertaken.

To revive the memory of a dead tale?

Not dead : for, even while I write, the newspapers tell of new editions of the well-known stories of "Clarissa Harlowe," "Charlotte Temple," and "Eliza Wharton," and, in less than a week after its first announcement, an order sent to Philadelphia for the last book is returned with the words, "not one copy left" !

"Clarissa Harlowe" has been called a masterly book ; but for the present generation it has been found necessary to cut its eight volumes of horror down to one, and so unnatural and impossible do its situations appear, that more than once the single volume is laid aside with a shudder.

Can it be possible that this cruel story really represents society which existed but little more than a century ago? Did parental tyranny, fraternal censorship, and social abandonment, really reach such a height in the very year which gave Eliza Wharton birth? If so, the reverses of that unfortunate woman are the more easily understood, and it becomes less impossible to believe that a woman connected with her by marriage, and herself gifted and good, should have found it necessary to point a moral with the sad story of her life.

Although I do not mean to dwell at this moment on any details, either actual or assumed, I cannot refrain from pointing out the singular circumstance that the first two American fictions — and, so far as I know, the fictions which have had the largest and steadiest sale, up to the publication of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” and a very large sale since that time — have been founded upon the real histories of two lovely women of the Stanley blood, descendants of the Great Earl, King of Man, and Charlotte de la Tremouille.

Did they inherit, with her beauty and grace, some restless blood which had surged through all the tumults of the Fronde, or battled loyally for the rights of the Pretender?

“Charlotte Temple,” although first published in London I believe in 1790, was immediately reprinted in this country. It was written by Susanna Haswell Rowson, born in England, but brought

early to America, and endeared to hundreds of our most eminent women as the principal of a girls' school, which was at the head of all institutions of the kind in New England for twenty-five years. "Charlotte Temple" was in reality Charlotte Stanley, the granddaughter of the Earl of Derby by a son whom he had disinherited.

Mrs. Rowson wrote her story with deep feeling; for the man who abandoned her heroine was Colonel John Montessor of the British service, one of the author's own kinsmen.

It is still possible to read "Charlotte Temple" with pleasure; but the extraordinary sale of the book is only to be explained by the well-known truth of the facts, and the romantic interest attached to the consequences of Montessor's sin.

Charlotte may have been beautiful and winning; but only her extreme youth, and the simple habits of the English parsonage in which she was reared, could excuse the folly of her life. Cruelly abandoned by her lover in the city of New York, she drank patiently the bitter cup she had filled for herself; and the loving hands of an American woman of unquestioned rank and purity laid her in the grave at the early age of nineteen.

About twenty feet north of the upper entrance to Trinity Church, and not more than twelve from the living tide which surges through Broadway, a broad brown stone, bedded in the sward, bears

the name of "Charlotte Temple," to which Mrs. Rowson's pen had given a distinction that "Stanley" could not boast.

But romance did not die with Charlotte. The child she left, and which she gave to her father in her dying moments, was adopted by Lieutenant-Colonel Grice Blakeney, of the 14th Royal Dragoons. Mr. Stanley, who had gone to New York in search of his child, died of grief soon after his return from America, and his wife soon followed him. Lucy Blakeney inherited a handsome fortune from her adopted father. Colonel Montessor had married in the city of New York before the death of his victim. He took his wife's name for reasons connected with her family property; and so, unsuspected by all the parties, his oldest legitimate son, some twenty years after, engaged himself in marriage to Lucy Blakeney, a girl of sterling strength and principle. At the time when they exchanged promises, Colonel Montessor was ill. His son was summoned to his death-bed at the very moment of betrothal. The dying man was impatient to see the face of the young girl who would soon have been his daughter. There was no portrait of Lucy, but her resemblance to Charlotte was perfect, and it was a miniature of her mother, taken for Colonel Montessor himself, that the young man held before his father's horror-stricken and dying eyes!

In the course of time the lover married, but Lucy devoted her remaining years to works of charity. In 1810 she came to this country, and visited the friends and the grave of her mother. The quarterings of the house of Derby, with the date of Charlotte's birth and death, were then set into the brown stone, on a heavy silver plate; but it did not long escape the greedy clutch of street thieves.

Mrs. Rowson did not fail to write out this "Sequel" to Charlotte's story; and, after her death in 1828, it was published. It has never lost its hold on the public mind; and a new edition of the two stories, wretchedly printed, in 1874 finds as many readers as that of 1790.

Charlotte Stanley was a near cousin of Abigail, the mother of Eliza Wharton; but far deeper in its hold upon the popular heart was the novel which told the story of the beautiful Connecticut girl.

Charlotte was the lost treasure of a ducal house, and her grave lies comparatively desolate in the streets of a great city; but the strength and beauty of Eliza's character have kept her memory green even under the suspicion of a great error. She, too, was the daughter of a clergyman, the honored Puritan minister of a provincial town. Her grave lies in an obscure country village where no living flesh has ever called hers kin, yet her grave stone is battered to the sod by the loving blows of those

who would keep some relic of that brave heart which, through despair and death, kept faith with a faithless lover; and, in the greenest summer grass, the constant tread of pilgrim feet still writes her name into the soil in characters more lasting than those upon the stone.

Eliza inherited all the grace and culture of the Stanley blood.

Her maternal ancestor, Thomas Stanley, had kept and transmitted the record of Shaksperian friendships; and her mother, Abigail Stanley, was a woman whose portrait, now hanging in the Hartford Athenæum, bears witness to the rare intelligence she bequeathed with her beauty. Her father was a man of prominent and significant character. Connected with Yale College from his youth, related to all the State dignitaries by his marriage, his own descent from the Stoddards, made Eliza cousin to the poet Trumbull, to Jeremiah Wadsworth, — the wealthy benefactor of Hartford, — to Pierrepont Edwards, and Joseph Buckminster. His learning and antiquarian tastes brought him the warm friendship of young men like Barlow, Baldwin, and Dwight, and those college lads who afterward became the well-known "Club of Hartford Wits."

Eliza Wharton was born into the best society of her State and time. Without the aid of wealth she won, through her beauty and gentleness, a wide dis-



tion, — a distinction never equalled in its kind in this country.

Hereafter I shall speak of the novel which bears her name: here I would only draw attention to the fact that it was by the great wealth of her intellect and the generosity of her sympathies, even more than by her personal beauty, that Eliza won her early triumphs, and attracted towards her all that was distinguished among the young men of the college and the State.

Her first accepted lover was the Rev. Joseph Howe, of Church Green, in Boston, a young man of rare talents. He was driven from Boston at the time of the siege, and took refuge with a party of friends at Norwich, Connecticut. His health failed; and, as the state of the city made it impossible for him to return, Eliza's father invited him to Hartford, where he died, after a long sickness, perhaps early in 1776.

Eliza watched over his last hours with tenderness; but, as she had loved him with moderation, she mourned for him without despair. She had been early betrothed with her own consent, and yet it would seem chiefly to please those who loved her. A far more serious grief to her was her father's death, which soon followed.

She had two sisters, Abigail and Mary. They both lived to extreme old age, — Abigail unmarried, and Mary as the widow of a Mr. Skinner. Neither

possessed any remarkable share of beauty or intellect.

Her only brother was preparing for college at the time of his father's death, and in more than one of her letters she expresses a thoughtful and tender anxiety about his future. The family should have been wealthy, but William Stanley, her mother's brother, was persuaded to leave a large property to the church of which her father had been pastor. The estate, including some of the finest land in Hartford, has been once before the courts, and it is rumored is soon to be put into litigation again. It is now worth between three and four millions; and collateral heirs claim it, on the ground that the terms of the bequest are no longer complied with.

In this way it came to pass that the family of the old minister were seriously embarrassed by the loss of his salary; and, perhaps for that reason, Eliza was again urged to marry, and this time her lover was one whose name and memory are distinctly stamped upon the Congregational Churches of New England.

The Rev. Joseph Buckminster, afterward settled at Portsmouth, N.H., was now a tutor at Yale, where he had been educated. Eliza had relatives and friends in New Haven, and a visit to the President's family was urged as a relief from the depression into which she had naturally fallen. The unusual stimulus restored her fine spirits, admira-

tion followed her every movement and her lightest word. She did not belong to the country or the century into which she had been born, and when the equivocal admiration of Aaron Burr, Pierrepont Edwards, and foreign secretaries was added to the reverent affection of the finest young men in the ministry, it was quite natural that the source of her extraordinary power should be questioned by the Puritan women of her *coterie*.

I make the suggestion of this possibility here, because, in addition to the fact that she was beloved to the very end by some very noble women, the closest scrutiny of the past fails to discover in her character any evidence of that coquetry which the novel has attached to her name.

She shrank from the love of Buckminster, — although there is no doubt that she returned it, — not only from an indisposition to cope with his terrible hypochondria, but because she felt that its acceptance would bind her to a narrow field of duty, and require of her an abstinence and self-renunciation fatal to her best development.

There was an absolute want of sympathy for her in her own home after her father's death, and this circumstance gradually conquered her reluctance. "I don't think I should grieve if I did not see a Wharton for some months," she wrote once. She made up her mind to accept Buckminster, but against the counsel of many of her younger friends,

and she discussed the matter thoroughly with some of her kindred, men of the world, who had a wider out-look into the future than her lover could boast.

To one of these, her cousin, but a man whose personal character was wholly disapproved by her lover, she was explaining her reasons for this step when he surprised them both. He had come for his final answer, and found her in the arbor confiding in a man he hated. He retreated in displeasure, which he would not allow to abate.

After waiting a reasonable time, she wrote to him, and told him that she could not be happy unless he knew how she was employed when he surprised her, and what she had intended her answer to be. The reply was the announcement of his approaching marriage, — a marriage which did not prevent him from remembering her with tenderness as long as he lived.

Eliza Wharton has been accused of "fluctuating moods." Her letters bear no trace of these, but surely Fate never laid a more ruthless hand upon a young girl's life! For many years she struggled on, unable to attach herself to any who sought her favor, but faithful to her friendships, active in behalf of all those who were suffering, and with no suspicion of the fatal future impending.

The latest letter of hers that I possess was written in November, 1782, and was sent to Mrs. Joel Barlow. It is full of practical kindness and cheer-

ful common-sense ; but in some New-Year's verses, written to Barlow himself about six weeks later, the tone is sad in spite of its generous kind wishes.

Five years later, at the age of thirty-six, she had undoubtedly linked her fate to that of some one who hesitated to acknowledge her publicly.

Her health falters, her spirits are unequal, and she passes nights away from her own home ; but, as it afterwards appeared, only with the Laurences, well-known neighbors and friends.

One visitor, her cousin Jeremiah Wadsworth, was often seen leaving her society at what the neighborhood called unseemly hours ; and in May, 1788, she was reported to have changed at the bank a large quantity of foreign gold. In the midst of the perplexities occasioned by the state of her health and the comments of the neighborhood, an invitation came to her from Mrs. Henry Hill of Boston, and was eagerly accepted. She left home suitably at mid-day in the ordinary Boston stage-coach, but it did not carry her to her friend's house. She probably alighted at Watertown, where she may have delayed some days, and then went to the little town of Danvers, near Salem, where her faded features were hardly likely to be recognized.

In some pleasant summer drive, accompanied by troops of friends, she may have first laid eyes on the retired country inn and tranquil graveyard, so soon to become for ever significant for her sake !

Never more did those who loved her look upon her eloquent face.

For two long months, Mrs. Hill watched for her guest, while the widowed mother patiently endured her anguish. Scandal was not yet busy with the beloved name ; for, although the strength of Puritan feeling found something to condemn or comment upon in Eliza's habits, yet her only questionable companions had been her own near relatives, men still too young to have an evil character permanently attached to them.

Then a brief paragraph in the "Boston Chronicle" told to aching hearts the whole story.

Early in June, she had arrived in Danvers, driven in a chaise from Watertown by a boy whom she had hired at the coach-house there. She went to the Bell Tavern, giving her name as a Mrs. Walker, who wished to wait there for her husband's arrival. As the weeks went on, her spirits sank. She walked frequently from her lodgings to the graveyard, — the very spot where she often stood, and where her body was afterwards laid, then commanding a pleasant shady slope. In July, 1788, she gave birth to a dead child, and died herself, a fortnight later, not so much of consumption, I think, as a broken heart.

Poor crushed flower ! There was no proof, as I shall hereafter show, if we except vulgar suspicion, that Eliza Wharton sinned further than by marry-

ing, possibly against counsel, the man whom she loved, at the mature age of thirty-six. On what pretence she was persuaded to conceal her marriage, and was so compelled to leave her home, we shall probably never know; but the motive must have been a strong one. It is certain that she expected her husband — it is equally certain that he sought her anxiously — in the way she had indicated; but, when disappointed, refrained from making a single inquiry in the town. Only a very conspicuous person, I think, would have carried his caution so far.

It was not Mrs. Henry Hill, but some still more loving heart, that erected a monument over that lonely grave. The brown stone of the Portland quarries holds and keeps her secret, standing lonely among the cold granite of the eastern coast.

Never once had the dying creature lisped a word of her history; and only a few unfinished letters and poems, in her own hand and written from various places, remained among her possessions. She had insisted that she was married; would have her ring buried with her; expressed no sense of guilt, but a living trust in God's love, quite unintelligible to most people of that generation.

When asked if her friends might not be sent for, she said she should soon go to them; but privately she added to one who waited on her, that her death

was wisely ordered, and was the easiest solution of many problems.

Her gravestone recorded her humility and benevolence, and added, —

“Let candor throw a veil over her frailties, for great was her charity to others.”

After her death, her family, which had been so beloved and so distinguished, seemed to melt away. The survivors lost all courage; and, after the death of her mother in 1795, her childless sisters were assisted by the parish, to which William Stanley had so unwisely left his whole property.

The young brother for whom Eliza had watched and prayed so anxiously was known in his later years as an antiquarian, the *habitué* of the Hartford Athenæum.

Her death sobered his gay spirits; and it was not until the year 1800 that he married. His wife, a woman of the first social standing, died in April, 1801, in giving birth to his only child.

And here we take our first step into the still unpublished “Romance of the Association.”

The brother of Eliza Wharton seemed only the sadder for the brief sunshine which had streamed over his hearth.

At the time of his young wife’s death, a dear friend of his dead sister, living not far away, had lost her first baby. She had been a Hinsdale, cousin to Emma Willard of Troy, to Aurora



Phelps, to Elihu and Elijah Burritt, and many more distinguished for intellect and power.

To her this only scion of the Wharton family was carried; and in this happy home, in the simplicity of her farm life, he grew up until it was necessary to send him to school. His foster-mother had nine children, and his favorite companion was Harriet, — the little girl nearest his own age.

When he went back to Hartford, he was old enough to worship the beautiful picture over his father's mantel.

"It is your aunt Elizabeth, who died before you were born," was the answer to all his curious questions. As he grew older, he saw and felt the shadow hanging over his father. When he entered college, the strange old Stanley silver, carved into rare figures with a chisel, was pledged to a family connexion to carry him through.

During all these years, he had kept up a tender intimacy with his foster-sister, who on her side thought him "graceful and charming as Pericles," but kept, nevertheless, to her own anxious way in life. It will be seen that hers was no common career. Her father, prostrated by asthma, passed the last thirty years of his life propped into an arm-chair. He was wholly unable to support his family. It was Harriet's brave hands that lifted the mortgage from his farm, built the new house, and filled it with every comfort for the sick brothers, who, one

after another, dropped wearily out of life as they drew near to manhood. It was she who educated her younger sister, and finally gave her in marriage to the Hon. Pinckney Hill of Georgia, who emigrated to Texas, where his two sons are now distinguished lawyers.

It was Harriet who opened the well-known Academy at Selma, after a perilous journey through the country of the Creeks. Here she married, and her husband, associating himself with Mr. Hill in the practice of the law, removed with her to Texas.

Twice shipwrecked, with an infant only five months old in her arms, this heroic woman, rescued by a British brig, was thrown upon the island of Galveston. It was in keeping with her whole story that it should be just a week after a tornado had laid every roof in the town flat. Here she was tenderly nursed by some of La Fitte's pirates, who had been pardoned by our government for services rendered to General Jackson at New Orleans.

All the books, stationery, and provisions the emigrants had provided for a two years' stay, were thrown overboard at the time of the wreck. A little money in a belt about his waist Harriet's husband had saved; and so at last they made their way to Bastrop, where they lived six happy prosperous months before the Comanches broke in upon their peace.

Young friends came out from Connecticut to join them ; and one night, when her husband was away at court, Harriet opened her gate to admit one dying man, while the dead body of his companion lay scalped and bleeding a little farther away in the grass.

A dozen romances are wrapt in this brave woman's life, but it is not mine to relate them.

I hurry through this night, when, having rushed in the darkness to summon the guard, she is brought back to watch by the dying and the dead, her wailing child within her arms. I hurry through the three years of starvation and terror — when, all escape to the coast cut off by prowling bands, they endured until endurance was no longer possible — to the morning when her husband said, —

“ Harriet, death is here, and it is yonder ; but, if *you* will risk it, I will start for the coast.”

And they started, the suffering child nestled in their wraps, lying on blankets under the wagon at night, creeping slowly through the tall grass by day, until at last the lights of Galveston shone through the gathering dusk. Then the overtaxed nerves gave way, and very soon the poor young mother must be sent back to Hartford to rest.

Disappointed in these more ambitious hopes, her husband went back to Alabama, and laid the foundation of a seminary for both sexes, which for twenty-five years had no equal in the South. Here, old

friends welcomed Harriet back. The years went on: her husband died of yellow-fever; five little ones were laid away among the magnolias in the graveyard; and, at the close of the war, two of Sherman's raids turned the seminary into barracks, and destroyed the noble prosperity she had been half a century in accumulating.

One daughter who had survived these horrors, and was both beautiful and accomplished, had a pleasant home in New Orleans.

Here at the close of the war, and more than sixty years old, our brave Harriet went, just in time to receive a little granddaughter and accept its mother's last sigh. Here in poverty, isolation, and sorrow, she chanced upon an old copy of "Eliza Wharton." In the preface to this edition, printed in 1855, a so-called history of Eliza's family was given, and in it she saw recorded the death of her foster-brother in a far-off city. The family was said to be extinct.

The boy who had shared her nursery had never married. When Harriet left home, he was still studying law. Soon after, the old parsonage was burned down, his father barely escaping with his life. The magnificent collection of manuscripts for which his grandfather had been famous, perished; and, when the young man shook the dust from his feet and turned away from Hartford, he carried, for his sole inheritance, an exquisite miniature upon

ivory of his Aunt Elizabeth; a ring of amethyst set in diamonds, which Buckminster had given her, — which was never worn and probably forgotten by both, — a dozen old Stanley spoons bearing the Derby crest, and the ewer and sugar basin cut with the chisel, that still told of the ancient tea-service never yet reclaimed.

Harriet had seen him from time to time as she went home to her dying brothers, to her father and mother. In the hurried years of the civil war, letters were impossible; and now, as she read the record of his death by her daughter's new-made grave, she wept with a fresh sense of loneliness.

On the other hand, this "graceful and accomplished Pericles" had easily cut *his* way through the world. He turned southward from the city which he hated, out of which his home had vanished, and which had not bestirred itself to save the burning papers which were even more than his home. He wrote and spoke several languages. He loved literature and ease. His was the true Stanley blood. He was a loving son, but fascinating as he was, never cared to perpetuate his race. He took care to let the ladies know that he was "not rich enough to marry," and that he never meant to ask anybody till he "got back the family plate."

When the war broke out, he was utterly alone in the world. Prompt to sustain all Union measures

in the border city where he lived, he kept a keen watch on North and South. His father had died in his arms, and his foster-sister was his sole kindred tie. When he heard that Sherman's army had twice ravaged the beautiful town where she lived, he roused himself to inquire.

The graveyard showed the graves of husband and children. The trampled soil of Alabama bore the wreck of the once dainty seminary buildings, and Rumor added, "She too is dead, away in Louisiana."

It did not seem strange to him. Why should she not die when her usefulness perished, when Hope and Love took to flight?

So they rested in their misapprehensions, — she, returned to that Northern hearth, cold for so many years; and he, in the daily practice of the law in his Southern home.

PART II. — REUNION.

“O let me, true in love, but truly write!”

*21st Sonnet. Shakspeare.*

“Then of thy beauty do I question make,  
That thou among the wastes of time must go.”

*12th Sonnet.*

“Then can I grieve, at grievances foregone, .  
And weep afresh Love’s long-since cancelled woe.”

*30th Sonnet.*

“So all my best is dressing old words new.”

*76th Sonnet.*

“No praise to thee but what in thee doth lie!”

*79th Sonnet.*



## II.

I FOUND "Charlotte Temple" and "Eliza Wharton" on my father's book-shelves when I was a very little girl. They were in a dusty corner by the side of Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling" and "Dorcasina Shelton," the only representatives of what my father was pleased to call "works of *fiction*."

Charlotte's story seemed pitiful enough, yet uninteresting, because her own character offered neither points nor variety, but "Eliza Wharton" interested and perplexed me. Of course, I was too young to take in the whole meaning of her story: still I detected its inconsistencies; I wondered over its stilted sentiment, the severe rebukes she received, and the almost idolatrous love she inspired; and, the older I grew, the more perplexed I became.

It is no small tribute to the literary skill with which its heterogeneous material is welded together that I read this book several times, could not easily dismiss the troubled interest it excited, and finally went to the nursery with my questions.

"I cannot tell you any thing about her," said my mother. "When I went to stay with the Hackers in Salem, we used to walk out to her grave. Even in winter, there was always a foot-track to the very spot, and all the young people round about went to it to plight their troth. You must go to your grandmother. *She* was born in Danvers."

Now my grandmother was only my grandmother's cousin.

That is to say, my grandfather was twice married. His first wife, a beautiful and dainty creature from the old Essex family of Symonds, had died soon after my mother's birth. The far-off cousin who came to nurse her in her last illness, and to take care of the two babies she left, had been her roommate at Madame Rowson's, and remained her most intimate friend. She was now my grandfather's second wife. She was born within a hundred yards of the spot where Eliza Wharton was laid. She was twenty years old when the deal coffin, borne by four kind-hearted strangers, was slowly carried past her mother's door; and this was her answer, delivered in Mrs. Rowson's stateliest way, and with due attention to the rhetoric of the occasion, —

"There is only one lesson for *you* to learn from 'The Coquette.' *You* are to mind your mother. If Eliza Wharton had done as her mother bade her, she would have died quietly in Hartford, and nobody would have called her hard names."

"But, grandmamma, was she a bad woman? If she was, what did you go to her grave for, and why do the young lovers like to talk of her?"

"I don't think she was," my grandmother reluctantly admitted. "She said she was a married woman with her dying breath, and her ring was buried with her. Her husband must have been a cruel man. She was always expecting him, but he never came. If he had loved her as he ought, she would not have died alone. But, whatever *he* was, *she* was true to him: she never gave the least hint of his name; she burned all her papers, and kept his secrets, and so perhaps some other woman loved him after she was dead. Her faithfulness was what the young lovers liked. Why, child, your own grandmother came home in tears from her grave the night she was promised to your grandfather!"

"Then the book can't tell the truth!"

"Can't it?" It was an old story to my grandmother, and she would not pursue it. But I thought of it all through my maiden life, never once accepting the conclusions of the novel, and always wishing that I could go to Danvers and stand upon her grave.

Soon after my marriage, I went to Portsmouth to live, and it happened that one of the dearest friends I found there was Mrs. Alexander Ladd, a lady nearly as old as my grandmother, yet as sweet and charming as a young girl of eighteen. We

chanced one day to speak of Buckminster, and she gave me one or two of his manuscript sermons.

"I think Eliza Wharton loved him," I said. "Why couldn't she make up her mind to marry him? Do *you* think she was a coquette?"

"Buckminster did not," said Mrs. Ladd, "and he ought to know. He would never allow any one to blame her in his presence. There were reasons enough why no woman should marry him. He was subject to terrible attacks of hypochondria even in college, and after Eliza's death they became still more prostrating. Mrs. Lee said she would not dare unveil her father's journal to a generation that felt no sympathy with his religious convictions."

"But I have heard that he liked the novel," I continued: "the family of the author insist that he thought the letters written to Boyer so like those written to himself as to make it probable they were copies."

"It is possible that he may sometime have spoken on some particular point to the author's husband," answered my friend, "for Mr. Foster was his relative in just the same degree as Eliza herself; but I can hardly conceive it. The book does him great injustice by representing him as discussing his love and her affairs with his friend. That is something he never would have done. As to the rest, I can tell you what happened in this very room. Just after the book was published, Mr. Buckminster

came to call on my mother. She was not quite ready to receive him, and probably forgot that a fresh copy of the book, just received from Boston, lay upon the table.

"When she came down, she found the doctor thrusting something under the coals upon the hearth. As he turned round to greet her with flaming eyes, she saw its leather covers curling in the blaze. 'Madam,' said he, pointing to the spot, 'there lies your book. It ought never to have been written, and it shall never be read, — at least, not in my parish. Bid the ladies take notice, wherever I find a copy I shall treat it in the same way,' and so saying he stalked out of the room, leaving my poor mother speechless."

So, little by little, my first feeling gathered strength. The years went by, and my son, old enough now to have a romance of his own, was leaving me the second time for Alaska.

We parted as those part who know that all the issues of life lie between that moment and their next meeting. We asked nothing of each other, but from San Francisco he wrote back, —

"While I am gone, write briefly some record of your own life, and a few words about my ancestors. I don't believe I know the name of my great-grandfather, and I think that is disgraceful."

I read the letter to my mother.

"You ought to do it," she said: "you promised

me long ago that you would go to Middleton and look up the history of my mother's family. Do it now."

My mother's mother had been the last of her line. My mother had never seen any one of her blood. In the earlier part of her life she had thought little about it; but, as she grew older and came nearer to the veil which covered the past, she became restless and impatient of her own ignorance.

So it happened that for her sake I went to Middleton, and stood upon the lovely beech-covered knolls, and pursued the crystal brooks which had replaced to my ancestors the fertile fields and purling streams of Kent. But I could not work so fast as she faded, and her sweet eyes were closed in death when I first laid my hand upon the old register.

I stood there dreaming, my cheeks wet and a soft mist over all the distance, when the harsh voice of the old clerk jarred upon my ear.

"They burnt up the records, — some of the folks at the Hall. Perhaps you'll find 'em at Danvers. A great-aunt of your mother's was there when Eliza Wharton died. The Symonds owned the Bell Tavern once."

Even here this shadow of a shade pursued me!

The course of weeks brought me to Danvers, and there a lady well known to every kind and gener-

ous work drove me about in her own carriage, and helped me in my earnest quest.

"That is where the Bell Tavern stood," she said, as we drove, "my father owned that at one time."

"Not while Eliza Wharton was in it?" I cried breathlessly.

"No," she said, "it was afterwards. He was building a house for himself, and bought the tavern to live in while it was building. It was a great deal larger than he needed, and so it sometimes happened that he kept a traveller overnight."

"Did you ever hear your mother talk of Eliza?"

"Oh, yes! very often, and I remember the Southwicks very well. Mrs. Southwick was with her to the end, and loved her so much!"

"Did she ever know who her husband was?" I asked, "or guess why he did not come to her in her last agony?"

"He did come," answered my friend, "but why he did not find her is still a mystery. Eliza had written to him and expected him; but it was after she was very feeble, and she took no one into her confidence. One afternoon, when the end was near, one of the Symonds boys was sitting at the door and saw some chalk letters on the flag. Thinking that they had been written in play, he stooped down and rubbed them out. Still later in the dusk, a man in a military dress, and of a distinguished appearance, came on horseback down the road.

As he drew near the tavern, he looked carefully about, rode up close to the door-steps, and at the tavern itself dismounted and seemed to search for something.

"He made no inquiries : no one happened to be about the tavern door ; and, although he was observed by some children and a few of the neighbors, no one thought to connect him with the dying woman until the following day, when the scattered chalk upon the door-stone still showed faint traces of the letters E. W., and the unconscious author of Eliza's disappointment owned that he had tried to wipe them out.

"No one told her what had happened, and it is certain that from that moment her spirits sank."

I could not speak for a few moments. I was thinking sadly of the disproportioned measure meted out to the sinners of the world.

Slight indeed compared to many, successfully concealed and never punished even by the reproaches of society, was the error of this rare and beautiful woman. Was it the love of God that so watched over her, and would not bear with the least backsliding from the good old way of her fathers?

While I was thinking, my friend spoke, —

"I wish you could tell me who it was that used to come every year, for many years after her death, to look at that lonely grave. Soon after the stone



was put up, a lady and gentleman came in a chaise to look at it. My father was in the tavern at the time, and entertained them. No one thought of asking who they were. Every year at the same time, they appeared, growing older and sadder till both were white-haired and bent. They sought us out wherever we were. Leaving the horse to be cared for, they walked away to Eliza's grave, stayed there a while, dined with us, and then went away. They never gave us any names, and we never asked for any. Who were they?"

I could not tell her then, but I know now. How their hearts must have ached as they sat there, wondering who had robbed them of their treasure, trying in vain to penetrate the secret those sods had covered!

In the summer of 1873, the American Association for the Advancement of Science met at Portland in Maine.

Now there lives in Portland a lady who years ago fell heir to many valuable papers, and among them to various letters of distinguished persons in Europe and this country at the close of the last century, letters which once belonged to the diplomatic correspondence of one of our ministers to France. On various pretences of writing histories or biographies, many of these papers had been wiled away from their possessor; and one who loved her and her many daughters had more than once begged

me to look at them and see if among the "nothing left" something could not be found of real value. When it was certain that I should go down to the meeting of the Association, my friend again appeared. "Go and look at those papers," she said: "it will entertain you at least, and it may be worth something to their owner."

So I promised with the usual reservations. It was a busy week, as everybody knows who was there. Excursions to the White Mountains, to the Islands, to Jackson and Professor Baird, kept us all busy; so the very last night came, and I had not done as I promised.

On that last night, however, I strolled in the warm sunset to the very outskirts of the town, where the papers were to be found.

The contents of the desk were laid before me, almost in the very first moment of a gracious Southern welcome; and I saw that it would be impossible to do justice to the files, even though I sat up all night. I asked permission to take them back to Boston, and, giving a formal receipt for them, took them away.

Weeks passed before I had time to look at them; but although, in a very proper sense of the words, there was "nothing left" of what had once been a most valuable collection, there was one pile of papers which riveted my attention, and would have well repaid me for a far greater fatigue,—

have justified, to my eyes, a far greater expenditure of time. One of these two was labelled "Bessie Wharton's Letters," in the handwriting of Joel Barlow. I wonder if there be among all my readers one young girl, interested to lift a cloud from some dead name, who can understand the thrill with which I took those papers into my hands?

A little more hesitation, and I should never have seen them ! Written six years before her death, they were not likely to hold the clue I sought ; yet for the first time I saw something which Eliza Wharton's own pen had written, for the first time I had opportunity to see how her own mind worked.

When the old parsonage burned down, in 1831, there must have been many papers in it, written by her pen, which we should have been glad to see ; but her brother was alive then, and his heart still sore. The box which held them mocked him with long past hopes, — seemed to him only a funeral urn. These letters ranged from 1778 to 1782. Many of them were sealed with the Stanley crest. They were written under circumstances which might have given room for some unseemly jesting, when the manners of the period are considered ; but I rose from my reading surer than ever of the purity and strength of Eliza Wharton's nature, — surer than ever that she followed no earth-born phantom, when she turned away from the beaten path. But in one respect I was utterly surprised. No reader

of these pages can be more amazed at any thing they contain than I was at the practical character of these letters. In them, she names many of her young friends, still students at Yale, men upon whose character no shadow of reproach ever fell. Some of them are poor: for them she plans and works, in the wisest way.

Buckminster graduated in 1779. In 1782, he married his fair bride in Kittery. According to the novel, this year should have found Eliza Wharton depressed and lifeless. It really finds her busy in household concerns, cheerfully planning household economies for Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, in Hartford, — calmly inquiring into the prices of crockery and provisions!

In the third part of this history, I shall gather together such papers as remain to indicate the character of this beautiful woman. I will not speak for them: they shall speak for themselves.

When I had done reading, I laid my head down upon my hands, and wondered seriously whether I should ever discover the secret of this unuttered life.

For a whole year I steadily bore the purpose in mind. I sought out the family of the author of "The Coquette." I corresponded with all who remained of the two families implicated by the story; but no one knew any better than I who was the father of Eliza's child, no one knew any better than I whether any of her blood survived. An edi-

tion of "The Coquette," published in 1855, claimed that the family was extinct. Yet I determined to challenge everybody who bore that fateful name; and as one slender silvery clue had floated upward from that yellow parcel of letters, so I felt a dim hope might another from the latest grave among her kin, if ever I could hope to find it.

The year passed. I saw many persons of the name in its passage; yet, in spite of all this, it never occurred to me to question one of them.

In August, 1874, the American Association was to hold its meeting in Hartford. Just before I left home to attend it, it happened that I read the whole of Eliza's letters aloud to a friend; but so little did I know of that city that I wholly forgot that I was going to the very spot still pregnant with the memories of her tragic end.

If I had remembered, I should have put her letters into my pocket. As it was, I left them at home.

On the evening of Tuesday, August 11th, I reached Hartford. Owing to some misapprehension, the room which had been engaged for me at Mrs. House's proved entirely unsuitable, and, with a feeling of lively gratitude to that lady for the grace with which she made a change possible, a gratitude which will always keep the memory of Hartford green, I went out into the night to find a place for myself.

I found it in a perfectly quiet little house, at what I believe was the north end of the town; a house which gave me a large, light, airy room, but where I neither expected nor wished to find society, and where I certainly never should have found myself under any other circumstances. At breakfast the next morning, my attention was attracted to a lady who sat opposite to me. She bore the unmistakable marks of a Southern woman accustomed to the best society; but her dress showed traces not only of the war, but of that quaintness which is inseparable from an isolated life.

While I was wondering what she thought of the omelette on her plate, and whether she was not secretly longing for a slice of "pone," she spoke, told me who she was, and asked some questions about the Association whose members were filling all the hotels in town.

So it happened that, when I came home at night, I brought a printed programme including a list of members already arrived, and offered it to the bright little lady. The next time I entered the dining-room I found Mrs. Burton anxiously waiting for me, programme in hand.

"I have been watching for you, so long," she said. "I have been quite impatient;" then, pointing to her paper, "Can you tell me who this lady is, this Miss Roberts from the West? I told you I had come to Hartford to see a Connecticut lady,

who was ruined by the war, that I came to this house to be near her? Well, she had a lady in her Southern school as a teacher for nine years, of this name. That Miss Roberts came North in 1861. We loved her very much. I have only seen her once in all these years; and then it was in New Orleans, and by a miracle. How can I get at her? What does she look like?"

My answers to these impetuous questions excited her still more, and she begged me to bring her face to face with Miss Roberts.

It was a service somewhat unwelcome, and one that I might easily have evaded. It would certainly bring me into contact with several persons whom I had no desire to seek; so I took the night to reflect upon it. If I introduced Mrs. Burton, I should feel obliged to provide excursion tickets for her, and the Mrs. Munson she had come North to visit. It was very possible that this might hamper me in many ways, interrupt my work, and separate me from the society I most desired to keep.

However, the next morning I took Mrs. Burton to the Hall; and very soon certain melodramatic outcries on the edge of the audience gave me fair warning that a recognition had taken place.

During the first week of our meeting, to get tickets was an easy matter enough. The week closed with an excursion down the river to the sea; for which, owing to the small size of the boat, few invi-

tations were allowed. I made no attempt to get any for the Southern party, but promised I would secure some to the Portland quarries, and to Ore Mountain, on the following Wednesday and Thursday.

Indeed, we were wedged into our boat with a closeness which far outdid that of the proverbial sardines ; and so cramped was my position, that, though I might use my eyes, I could hardly use my tongue, and a brief respite only came when, dropping some of our party near the mouth of the river, Professor Haldimand sat down beside me, and showed me a lovely enamelled bead dug out of an Indian grave in Pennsylvania, which had started on its travels from "Tyre by the Sea," and, after coasting Cornwall, had served the belles of Iceland and Eskimo-land in turn, and, having kept faithful company with wampum, was now floating down the tide with us, in the society of Dr. Steiner's emerald, and a nameless Hartford lady's solitaires.

It was pleasant to have this atom of enamel as a make-weight in the balance kept with a certain distracting paper on "The Conservation of Molecules" literally "thrown in" to our discussion the night before. The lovely lights and shadows of an exquisite sunset, stealing through the columns of the wooded heights, and mirrored under the bank, seemed in soft keeping with the weird story of the bead, and the tender radiance of the moon which had shone upon Eden and its "molecules" as well



as now upon us. But none of these distractions could draw my eyes from the tall figure of a white-haired man, who stood against the door of the saloon, leaning on his staff and gazing out into the shadows. When I found myself persistently looking at him, I inquired, at those odd moments when speech was possible, *who* he might be, but no one knew him; and then I decided that he must be lame, and that my sympathy was stirred because he had been standing, like many younger people, nearly all the day. There he stood, however, his genial, glowing face giving no great evidence of fatigue, until the boat turned to ascend the river, and then I missed him.

Monday morning found me at the State House, wearily bobbing up and down between the papers that I wanted to hear and the crowded committee room below, where were dealt out the excursion tickets that I wanted, yet did *not* want, to secure. My New York friend laughed at me, as she sat lazily in the shadows of "evolution;" but cried out, "Since you are in for it, get mine also!" which I meekly accomplished.

Now it happened that as days went by, I had seen something of the lady whom Mrs. Burton had come North to visit.

She interested me profoundly. In her calm and lovely face, I saw the traces of a life of action and a life of sorrow.

I heard that, although her years were as three-score years and ten, she still desired to earn her own bread, and was anxious to find some vacant post to fill. So, oddly enough, as it afterwards seemed, on the very day we were to go to the quarries, I went to Mrs. Aurora Phelps, — a lady more than eighty years of age, and who has still a wide connection among the teachers of young girls, — to see if any thing could be found for her.

Mrs. Phelps gave me some little encouragement, and, with my heart a little lighter on Mrs. Munson's account, I went with my own party to the Middletown train.

The excursion tickets for this day were double. They took us first to the lovely little chapel connected with the Church school, and called by Bishop Berkeley's name. Thence to the Wesleyan University, where we inspected museum, observatory, and library, and afterwards ate at the expense of the citizens a hot dinner at the hotel. As we came out of the library, I saw again the tall figure of my "unknown," limping a little as he seemed to walk and talk and think alone. I did not see my Southern friends.

After dinner, at least a hundred new people joined our party, for an excursion to the quarries.

My companion and myself loitered a little on the way to the ferry, — lost the first boat, and so found ourselves alone on the wharf, to meditate on "structure"

at our leisure. Once over the river, we sat down on the trunk of an ancient tree, long since converted into a fine slab of "brown front," and I gave up a late search for fossils in the far dearer chance of penetrating a live heart, and listening to a love story whose tides swept round the globe. Thank God for the living power which now and then bursts through conventional fetters, melts strange hearts into one, and gives to those grown cold in disappointment and isolation a passing glimpse at least of the great central fires of Life and Motion!

Just as my eyes overflowed and my heart softened, a little ragged child, with fagots in her arms, came along the sandy track of the brown quarry, and, lifting her great shy eyes to the elegant dress of my companion, stopped short and said softly, "How pretty!"

"Yes, indeed," I responded, and was going to bring the child, that she might touch the soft velvet, and see the shimmer of the lustrous silvery silk, when I caught sight of Mrs. Burton, Mrs. Munson, and Miss Roberts hurrying in troubled agitation towards the town. It was quite clear that the strength of threescore and ten had been overtaxed by the effort to keep up with younger explorers; and so I hurried towards the hotel also, advising Mrs. Munson to rest until the very moment of return.

I meant to keep her in sight, for I was less a

stranger than any of her party ; but other matters occupied me, and I saw her only when she started, a long hour too soon for the depot, in the hope that a slow walk would prevent utter exhaustion.

As for our party, — starting later, we were invited to rest in Professor Gardiner's fine old house, where we were all needlessly startled by the whistle of an approaching freight train, and finally stood in the darkness on the platform a full hour.

In the midst of this, when no one could see another's face, I heard the weary voice of Mrs. Munson, and succeeded in piloting her to the little ticket-office, — so crowded that nothing less than her white face and fainting body could have secured a seat. Her party had lost its way, had doubled or trebled its distance, and reached the point of departure long after the rest of us.

I left her there with her friends and a glass of water, and returned to the outer air.

Of the horrors of that hour of waiting, when three hundred people stood crowded together on the narrow plank, I need say nothing to any one who has ever arrived at Middletown by night. When the train came rushing up, the reason of the delay was apparent.

It was freighted with a large excursion party of a ruder kind, from a more remote point, and into the cracks of its huddled hundreds the already "molten metal" of our party was to be poured!

Naturally enough, those of us who had our wits about us crowded towards the car.

Suddenly, a strong voice made itself heard. "Gentlemen, stand back! Don't you see there are no seats for you? Let the ladies come first;" and the diminished pressure made it certain that a strong arm seconded the strong voice, that the crowd sifted under it, — the women passing on, the men kept back. While I waited below, the voice of Mrs. Burton rang back from the platform like a bell.

"Oh, sir! protect my friend! She is old and very tired. They will hurt her, if they press on her;" and then I felt rather than saw in the dim air, how the man who had been speaking put his cane between his legs, both hands behind the shoulders of poor Mrs. Munson, and gave her a steady lift upwards. This done, we both followed her. Mrs. Munson passed into the third seat from the door, and began to rearrange her disordered dress. I stood near.

The man, sheltered by the obscurity, found an odd seat near the door by a lady whose expressive tones soon indicated Miss Roberts. With her he kept up some geological discussion, which so interested Mrs. Munson, that, leaning backward, she said to a gentleman who sat opposite, —

"Will you change seats with me, sir? I should like to hear what my friend is saying."

The change was made in a moment. There was

a rustle, a cough, and then I heard Miss Roberts say, —

“But I must introduce you to my friend;” and then it appeared, that, in strict conformity to her frank Western habit, Miss Roberts did not know the name of the gentleman to whom she was talking.

She turned, “Will you give me your name, sir, if you please?”

I cannot tell why at that moment there was such utter silence in the car. The coarse factory folk we had fallen among could have had no sympathy with what was coming; but I heard the answer clearly, —

“William Wharton!”

Mrs. Munson sprang to her feet. “What? what did you say? William? —” she gasped out, and, rising also, he answered in the same excited tones, — “Yes, William, William Wharton.”

Still the same breathless silence, but an unsavory crowd pressing closer and closer toward our corner.

“And do you know who *I* am?” Mrs. Munson cried; and, as they stood opposite, she fell upon his bosom, and the stalwart form of my ‘unknown’ came into the shifting light, his white beard mingled with her black laces, and his strong arms held her fast.

For a moment the whole car was in confusion.

Nothing could be heard. Mrs. Munson lay exhausted and half fainting. I heard dimly the words "my sister," and then Mrs. Burton's voice.

"Who *are* you? Who *are* you?" every word accompanied by a rapid and violent attempt to shake the strong arms loose.

"You are insulting my friend, sir. Let her go. She *has* no brother."

But she might as well have assaulted the strong shaft on Bunker Hill. The closely folded arms did not relax, the deaf ear did not hear till the storm of emotion had passed, and the two old people sank into their seats.

Only dimly did anybody understand.

"She has found *somebody*," said a man in the crowd, and raised a stunning "three times three;" but the parties themselves neither cared nor heard. Memory had gone backward to the days when the little girl sipped her milk from the boy's porringer, toasted apples before the dripping brands, held the shagbarks to the Christmas blaze, or shyly mended the well-worn socks which the tired feet threw off after a hot summer tramp to the old farm.

Now both stood alone at the end of life. Mrs. Munson had found "*somebody*," but whom? I had found my unknown, whence came he? That night I answered neither question.

. . . . .

"Well," said Mrs. Burton at breakfast the next morning, "wasn't that a surprise last night?"

"A very great surprise," I answered, laughing; "but I have not the least idea what happened; and, whatever it was, it took the life out of me, and I had not strength enough to ask a question."

"I don't half understand it myself," said the little lady. "I went home with them, but they were so excited they could not talk. Mrs. Munson has found a foster-brother, and he has believed her dead ever since the last year of the war. Some of the professors found it out, and begged them to make a jubilee of it and go to Salisbury to-day; but Mr. Wharton seemed to shrink from it. I don't believe they'll go."

But when, half an hour later, I went to the depot, they had evidently thought better of it. They could not escape if they would. The story had found wings; and if they had chosen to stay at home, we should have stayed with them. My unknown hero stood waiting for the cars, his face flushed and his eyes tearful. Mrs. Munson still clung to his arm, looking bewildered, but exquisitely happy.

It would have been touching to see two young lovers reunited after years of separation; but it was far more moving to look at these two people, sole survivors of the happy morning of life, brought together, without warning, after the common term of existence was ended.



"I am glad to see you," I said, putting out my hand. "They told me you had declined to be a spectacle!"

"Well, as to *that*," said the old man humorously, "I didn't so much care; but, it was a *pair* of spectacles!" and he looked down at the happy figure on his arm.

Happy indeed; far happier than he; for little would she have cared had there been *three* "pairs of spectacles."

We got into the car, the old friends keeping close together, touching each other's hair, and looking through each other's glasses, like a couple of children.

There was scarce a dry eye in the company; and by and by the whole party came to them in pairs, took their hands, and congratulated them upon their *fête*. Seated behind them, I listened and watched in pleased curiosity for a while; then, sure of getting at the whole story by and by, I went with Professor Brewer to the rear of the car, that I might see the "twin lakes," the "summit," and the lofty passes.

This over, I came back through the dining saloon, and took my luncheon there, sitting with Professor Gray by the open side of the car.

I had also to provide a lunch for a sweet little woman with snowy hair, who would rather starve than be swirled over the platform of a car moving at the rate of fifty miles an hour.

So it happened that I went back without my gloves, burdened with peaches and sandwiches, sitting down unconsciously directly in front of Mrs. Munson and her brother, and looking back into their happy faces. Mr. Wharton's hand lay over the back of my seat as he talked to me. It seemed to be half covered by a heavy seal-ring, cut in bloodstone. I could not help looking at it. Indeed "its beauty was its own excuse for" seeing. It carried the heads of Socrates and Plato; and was one of those rare antiques we sometimes see, where every retreating line, polished like a mirror, utters swift defiance to all modern art.

"You are looking at my ring?" he said, and held it out proudly. The car clattered on. The ring shook in company. I put out my hand to steady it. The moment my flesh touched his, a sort of quiver ran through all my nerves; and, without looking at the ring, without knowing what I said, without intending it indeed, the words came, —

"Do you know any thing of Eliza Wharton?"

It was the first time I had thought of her since I came to Hartford.

My companion's face flushed; his eyes seemed to leap out of his head. He was too much startled to keep his secret if he had desired to do so. He leaned over the seat, and whispered slowly, —

"She was my own aunt!"

I looked him full in the face, knowing well that

he would see nothing in mine but tender sympathy. "Then I have something of hers which ought to belong to you," I said, and turned to explain to Mrs. Munson; but her face was steadily turned away, and the throat her position brought into view was as white as if she were dead.

It was Harriet Hinsdale Munson who had found her foster-brother!

Little wonder that they who had parted in the flush and beauty of ripening years did not recognize each other under snowy locks, and the plump outlines of declining years. Not another word did we speak till the train ran into "Ore Mountain," and we found the platform covered with masses of jetty stalagmite.

Then William Wharton scurried down upon me like a kite, hurried me into a chair, sat down in front of me, and kept watch and ward till I had told him all I knew.

Forcibly enough he reminded me of the terrible Paul Emanuel, who once whisked Lucy Snowe into the dim darkness of the ghost-trodden attic; not only at first, but again when the saucers of ice-cream came about, and I was told that I might eat one, two, three, if I liked, but I was to do it quickly and turn back to my strange talk!

"How should *he* know that I liked *un petit pâté à la crème*?"

So I sat there, and told much that these pages

have revealed, and questioned eagerly of all I needed to know.

Every thing confirmed the story as I tell it. All that he knew was, that Eliza left home for a visit to her Boston friends; that, instead of passing her last night in Hartford quietly at home, she sat till daybreak on the star-lighted gambrel roof of William Laurence's old house near the State House Square, and sat there utterly alone.

*At the time no one could solve the mystery of her fate.*

Jeremiah Wadsworth, her cousin, long married, was often seen to leave her at a late hour. He had been in France, and the foreign gold she had offered at the bank was supposed to have come to her from him. Whatever the truth was, it is probable that he knew it.

Year after year, William Wharton's father and his aunt Abigail took the mysterious journey concerning which my Danvers friend had questioned me; till at last the old horse died, the old chaise fell to pieces where it stood, and the two travellers were forced to give up the pilgrimage.

The old parsonage burned down; its treasures, bound and unbound, crumbled into ashes. So, alas! did the beautiful portrait which hung over the mantel. As a child, William had loved it and prattled over it, but not a word came in answer to his questions about it; and, save in the brief utter-

ance which told him whom it represented, he never heard Elizabeth's name. But at college the story found him out. One man, whose licentious character made him a fit object of suspicion, was named in possible connection with it, in spite of kinship, marriage, and a residence forty miles away,—a suspicion so improbable that, in order to justify it, the author of the novel founded upon Eliza's story was obliged to represent him as living in Hartford.

His whole heart fired by her beautiful memory, William swore that if ever he met another who bore that man's name, he would shoot him on the spot; but he did meet such an one when years had passed and blood was cooler.

They met in summer at the sea, hunted and fished together, and William never made his secret known.

The Stanley plate had never been found: it had passed from hand to hand, and he was still in quest of it. The miniature of Eliza and the Buckminster ring had gone with him to his distant home; but not a paper that her hand had touched had he ever held.

These things were not told in a moment. Less docile than Lucy Snowe, I darted from beneath his guarding hands, to see that my companion was guided to the shaft I was forbidden to see, and to beg the kind Professor Gray to break away some of the pillared crystals for my benefit.

Near by, I found Mrs. Munson, whom in his excitement and haste William Wharton had left by the way. Still trembling, she exclaimed, —

"Oh, how could you? — never did I — in all those years — I thought I must sink into the grave when I heard her name; but tell me, what shall I do? He won't be satisfied till he knows when I heard he was dead. It was in that book; would you tell him?"

"And why not?" I said. "The story is a hundred years old. We are not children."

Before I could say any more, my ancient Pericles had become impatient, and came with out-stretched arm to bear me away. Harriet caught him.

"It was in New Orleans," she said; "in the very book that told Eliza's story. It took my breath away."

"Harriet," he answered, so solemnly that, though he only bent, I seemed to see him lift his hat, "Harriet, I read my own death there!"

Were the words symbolical? Might not his life have been something very different, if that tale had never been told? At all events, Eliza's race will die with him.

As we turned back and resumed our seats, to talk the story out, I found that William Wharton, who was somewhat sensitive still over the broken fortunes of his family, felt, nevertheless, a strange pride in rehearsing his descent from that Stanley

who had been Shakspeare's friend; that he had at his tongue's end all the legends, traditions, and anecdotes connected with that old friendship, and that he liked still to think of the old plate that Thomas Stanley, "of more consequence than most," had brought over with him. I know not how widely these traditions have been spread, but I thought it pleasant to preserve them. As to the plate, there is little doubt that it would have been easily found, had not the proud man shrunk from recurring to the trials and perplexities which brought about its loss.

When we parted, it was to meet once more to read over Eliza's letters. We were all tremulous with a strange delight when we remembered that she who had waked up yester-morn friendless and poor, shorn of all the natural results of a most useful life, could now lie down in peace, sure that a friendly hand would compose her to her rest.

When, the next morning, the excited members of the Association crowded round me, and begged me to write out the story, Professor Lyman, of Yale College, said, —

"Make it as short as you can."

Short!

"The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds  
He all."





PART III.

THE STORY AND THE LETTER.

“ But he that writes of you, if he can tell  
That *you* are *you*, so dignifies his story.”

84th Sonnet. *Shakspeare.*

“ Your love and pity doth the impression fill  
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow.”

112th Sonnet.

### III.

**B**EFORE offering to the reader the real letters of Eliza Wharton, I wish to say a few words concerning the story which bears her name.

"Eliza Wharton ; or, The Coquette," a story written by Mrs. Hannah Foster, wife of the minister at Brighton, Mass., whose husband was also a cousin of Eliza, was issued soon after the tragedy it was supposed to rehearse. Mr. Boyer and Major Sanford were immediately identified by the public with Joseph Buckminster and Pierrepont Edwards ; and, to avoid confusion, I shall use the latter names in criticising it.

Eliza is represented as a provincial belle, weary of the restraints of poverty and a parsonage, and ambitious of a sphere she cannot fitly fill.

After Mr. Howe's death, which is made to follow her father's, although it really preceded it, she is sent to New Haven in search of gayety and diversion.

Here she is thrown into military society, and made to meet Edwards as if for the first time. In reality, she passed her time when at New Haven in the family of the president of Yale College, and Edwards was her cousin, whom she had known as a married man ever since he was nineteen, — some eighteen years.

Her inquiries into his habits and character pique Edwards, who, in formal imitation of Lovelace, is made to assert that the woman who undertakes to reform him deserves whatever fate impends; and because she is a prude, shall be doomed. But the real Eliza was no prude: she was more than once reproached for not indicating by her manner the real distinction between vice and virtue.

In the midst of his courtship, Edwards marries for money, and, when married, removes into Eliza's neighborhood, for the express purpose of insulting with his attentions the woman whom Howe and Buckminster had loved. The simple fact is, that, married at nineteen, before he ever courted any other than his wife, at no time did he ever live nearer to Hartford than New Haven, when a weekly post, carried by a man on horseback, connected the two places.

Eliza is once made to say, in the pages of the novel, that, in literary conversation, Edwards could not bear a distinguished part; but it is certainly true

of Edwards, as well as Aaron Burr, that when in the society of women, the highest culture, the most exquisite wit, and a perfect *savoir faire*, as well as a sure instinct of spiritual things, were added to that foreign grace which fitly distinguished the Irish blood derived from the Dukes of Kingston.

The final surrender of his love by Buckminster, just as she was about to fix her wedding-day, is made to turn upon the fact that he surprised her in a private interview with Edwards in the arbor of the old garden. Citizens of Hartford will show you to-day the paved street that crosses the spot where that arbor stood, but will tell you at the same time that it was not Edwards whom she met there.

After this issue, the novel plunges Eliza into dejection and despair; but my letters are about to show her, at that very moment, cheerful, industrious, and useful.

When her fatal departure draws near, the novel represents her as confessing her guilt, confiding in her friend, and writing to her mother; but no confession passed her lips, no confidence was ever given, no letter was ever written by her, for the simple reason that all the circumstances of her departure were open and natural.

The novel represents her as carried away at night by her seducer, unknown to those who loved

her. In simple fact, she went away in the regular stage-coach, at high noon, with everybody's warm approval.

The novel describes its hero as aware of her retreat, and allows him to represent her as lecturing him with the innocent air of a *Clarissa*. For her sake, his injured wife quits her husband's roof.

But these are the fables of a warm imagination, intent on holding out Mrs. Yorke's "blood-red light" to the unwary, and heated by the reading of Richardson's novel.

The general tone of the letters which constitute the novel is wholly unlike that of the real letters. They indicate a style of living and manners wholly different from the actual facts. They contain confessions of volatility which Eliza never had occasion to make, and allusions to her own charms and the perplexities in which they involved her, unlike the humble and modest girl she really showed herself. In reading the novel, one is compelled to think that for the heroine the pivot of the world's history is her own possible marriage.

If the real Eliza had been in the least like the heroine of the book, we should not now be seeking in vain to solve the mystery of her fate.

I have long thought that there is no form of human injustice so bitter and so enduring as that perpetrated by the author of an historical novel, yet

I do not know that we are entitled to criticise the use made of these materials.

Charles Kingsley, in the most brilliant novel of this century, has wiped out every trace of the historical Hypatia. No one has blamed him; yet, I confess that to deal in the same way with families in our own midst seems to me a more reprehensible thing. To have done Eliza any justice, the novel should have stated that the lovers who made her misery, and those whose names were quoted to her disgrace, were all in nearly the same degree her kindred. Aaron Burr and Pierrepont Edwards were as near to her father, through the Stoddards, as Jeremiah Wadsworth or Buckminster himself.

This simple fact alters the whole face of the story; for it shows that the only persons touched by the tongue of malice or curiosity were relatives with whom she had been intimate from her childhood. At the time of her death, Pierrepont Edwards was not thirty-nine, nor was Aaron Burr thirty-three. At a time when newspapers hardly existed, — when it took a week for the stage-coach to bring the news from New York to Hartford, and when a town so small had few points of contact with metropolitan life, — at a time, in short, when these two extraordinary men were still young, there was no reason why Eliza Wharton should have avoided their society, or have suspected what might hereafter be charged upon the tenor of their lives.

Buckminster was never the person to delight in sentimental talk, as the novel would have him ; and the intrigues by which he initiates his courtship would have been impossible to his spirited character.

No reader of the book can fail to see that there is more life and power in the letters of Edwards than in those of the heroine. I was puzzled to account for this, until it suddenly flashed upon me that they were modelled upon those of Lovelace. I think, too, that the influence of Richardson's story may be seen wherever the author departs from the facts. Whoever Eliza's lover may have been, he had no part in her departure from home, did not accompany her flight ; for parts of letters addressed to him from every point between Hartford and Danvers were found among her papers. That she expected to meet him soon after arriving at her destination is as certain as that she was cruelly disappointed. If her marriage, which must have taken place in or near Hartford, was a legal one, it is not yet too late for the name of her husband to transpire. That it was so, I infer from the indications that Jeremiah Wadsworth was privy to the facts.

Now, Eliza Wharton was not only a gifted but a clear-headed and practical woman. She had known Edwards ever since she was sixteen, and Wadsworth ever since she was twenty-one, as mar-



ried men. She had kept herself above reproach during the impulsive years; and at thirty-six it would have been impossible for her to delude herself into the belief that she was legally married to any man who had a wife living.

"Must I die alone?" she wrote (probably from Watertown) to the man who had tortured if he did not deceive her. "Shall I never see you more? I know that you will come, but you will come too late. This is, I fear, my last ability. Tears fall so fast I know not how to write. Why did you leave me in such distress? but I will not reproach you. All that was dear I forsook for you, but do not regret it. May God forgive in both what was amiss. When I go from here, I will leave you some way to find me. If I die, will you come and drop a tear over my grave?"

These words, written when she was near her end, yet while she expected to change her habitation before the birth of her child, show no sharp remorse for crime: only such gentle compunction as any womanly soul might feel. Nor does she blame her husband: some duty might have kept him from her. Was he near? what led her to stop at *Watertown* on her way? Some verses written at the same time conclude, —

"Oh thou for whose dear sake I bear  
A doom so dreadful, so severe,  
May happy Fates thy footsteps guide,  
And o'er thy peaceful home preside."

She was far too intelligent a woman to have prayed thus for any of the men upon whom suspicion fell.

A better poem — copied, I fancy, from some Connecticut newspaper, and therefore not bearing upon the last facts of her life — was published in the Preface to the edition of "The Coquette," published in 1855. She speaks in it of her lover's death, and her father's, of her entire want of friendly guidance through the following years, and goes on, —

"Again the admiring youths around me bowed,  
And one I singled from the sighing crowd.  
Well-skilled he was in every winning art,  
To warm the fancy or to touch the heart.  
Why must my pen the noble praise deny  
Which virtue, truth, and honor should supply?  
How did my heart embrace the dear deceit,  
And fondly cherish the deluding cheat,  
Delusive hopes, and wishes sadly vain,  
Unless to sharpen disappointment's pain!"

As this begins, —

"Thy presents to some happier lover send,  
Content thyself to be Lucinda's friend,"

I think it must refer to a time when she was still sought in marriage, and bewildered by many lovers. To the opinions held of her in her own home, the stone set up at Danvers furnishes the only clue. As the inscription is now illegible, it should be preserved.

THIS HUMBLE STONE,  
IN MEMORY OF  
ELIZA WHARTON,  
IS INSCRIBED BY HER WEeping FRIENDS, TO WHOM SHE  
ENDEARED HERSELF  
BY UNCOMMON TENDERNESS AND AFFECTION.  
ENDOWED WITH SUPERIOR ACQUIREMENTS, SHE WAS STILL MORE  
DISTINGUISHED  
BY HUMILITY AND BENEVOLENCE.  
LET CANDOR THROW A VEIL OVER HER FRAILTIES, FOR GREAT  
WAS HER CHARITY TO OTHERS.  
SHE SUSTAINED THE LAST PAINFUL SCENE  
FAR FROM EVERY FRIEND,  
AND EXHIBITED AN EXAMPLE OF CALM RESIGNATION.  
HER DEPARTURE WAS ON THE 25TH OF JULY, 1788, IN THE 37TH  
YEAR OF HER AGE.  
THE TEARS OF STRANGERS WATERED HER GRAVE.

Mrs. Locke's preface to the edition of 1855 is more misleading than the novel to which it is prefixed. The facts are wrongly adjusted. Eliza's father had been dead twelve years at the time of her death; and it was more than thirty years after her mother's death that the old house at Hartford was burned, with its treasures.

This preface assumes the marriage of Eliza, distinctly states that the Hon. Pierrepont Edwards was the father of her child, and does not admit the fact of his marriage to another previous to Eliza's death.

But this is all wrong. Pierrepont Edwards was married to Miss Ogden, of Princeton, N. J., in 1769, when he was a boy of nineteen. He was never separated from her, and she lived until 1795, seven years after Eliza Wharton's death.

When, relying on Eliza's cousinly correspondence with him, the unhappy mother wrote to ask if he knew where her daughter was, he replied curtly, with an oath, that he "wished to God he did," — a wish that any friend of hers might have shared; and if the appearance of "foreign gold" in her hands had any significance, it surely did not point towards him.

Every feeling heart must be glad to acquit this strange man of a crime the basest could hardly have resolved upon under the same circumstances, and which he certainly never confessed.

But if Edwards steadily denied this story, why was it never authoritatively confuted in the lifetime of her mother? Simply because Edwards's own peculiarities, clearly recognized in later years, made *his* denial valueless, until the true actor in these scenes claimed his rightful place; simply because the broken-hearted family could not do for her as she would certainly have done for them. After her death, no one of her family showed the courage such a step would require. I have not been able to ascertain the date of the first edition of "Eliza Wharton;" but I cannot think it was published during her

mother's life. The thought of Pierrepont Edwards carries us back to the Stanley and Pierrepont graves in "Thong Church," and recalls a passage in his father's diary without which our story would be incomplete. The "mad blood" of the Dukes of Kingston, which had surged through the eccentric veins of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, which had impelled her unhappy son to a worse than gypsy life, yet was always associated with a powerful intellect and unnumbered charms, seemed to leap aside from Sarah Pierrepont, of whom her husband wrote, while he was still a boy, words that have a curious fascination when associated in our minds with the metaphysics of his desponding brain.

"They say that there is a young lady, only fourteen years old, in New Haven, who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world; and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her aid, fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for any thing except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while to be received up where He is, being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and a singular purity in her affections, and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong, though you should give her all the world.

"She will go from place to place, singing sweetly,

and seems to be full of joy, and no one knows for what."

"And no one knows for what"! What a story this tells of the Christian cheer of that generation! This divine creature Jonathan Edwards made first the mother of his reckless and gifted son Pierpont; and, second, through a most lovely daughter, the grandmother of Aaron Burr, — two men as abnormal and as little to be judged in our narrow knowledge as George Gordon Byron himself.

How could the unhappy man help believing in predestination and original sin?

Yet of this same stock came John Pierpont of Hollis Street, hero and bard!

It is perhaps necessary, in closing this review, to allude to a *jeu d'esprit*, published at the time of the destruction of the Bell Tavern, some years ago, by Fitch Poole, late keeper of the Peabody Institute in Peabody, and recently deceased at an advanced age. It purported to describe letters and articles secreted in the house. Pleasantly intended as it was, on the first day of April, it seemed to my mind only a cruel and revolting hoax.

In printing the following passages from the only original papers of Eliza Wharton known to exist, I have extracted from the personal detail of pages, never intended to be printed, such passages as indicate her characteristics, her companions, and her

employments. They were written between her twenty-ninth and thirty-second year, under circumstances a little peculiar.

Eliza Wharton had met Joel Barlow and Ruth Baldwin, to whom he was even then engaged to be married, at a Christmas party in New Haven in 1778. At a game of forfeits, Joel and Eliza were ordered to conduct towards each other as man and wife for the whole evening. They appear to have carried out the game with great spirit, adopting the nine Muses as their children. Melpomene, the reputed favorite of Barlow, well known already as a poet, is frequently caricatured in this correspondence as *Quammeny*.

Of Barlow himself — of his high character, his great services, and noble projects — it is to be hoped the country will yet hear adequately through a biographer who has already been at work for twenty-five years. His wife, constantly called his "second wife" in this correspondence, was Ruth Baldwin, daughter of the Hon. Michael Baldwin, of New Haven, by his first marriage. She was one of the loveliest and best of women, to whose influence her husband always attributed his worldly success. His sense of her worth can be best estimated by reading a letter written to her by him at Algiers, in 1796, and published in the "New Englander" for July, 1873. The Barlows never had any children; but Mrs. Barlow ultimately adopted her step-sister,

twenty years younger than herself, — an exquisite creature, who, after refusing an offer of marriage from General Lafayette, married later in life Colonel Bomford, of the city of Washington. Mrs. Bomford was for more than forty years the idolized correspondent of George William Erving, at one time our minister to Spain. It is probable that Joel Barlow's marriage was opposed by the lady's family on the ground of poverty. He was married when his bride was away upon a visit, and it was long before the offence was forgiven. One of her brothers — the Hon. Abraham Baldwin — was a tutor at Yale when these letters were written, was afterwards President of the University of Georgia, a member of the convention that framed the American Constitution, and an United States senator until his death.

Henry, of Pittsburg, Pa., was one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The "Mr. Dwight" so affectionately described by Eliza was the honored President of Yale, busy about this time in altering Watts's Hymns, with Joel Barlow. Distinguished afterward for more things than this article has space to mention, he had already served in the field, and was keeping school at Wethersfield, where we find Eliza on a visit to his family.

The "Webster" of the letters was famous in the spelling-books of past generations, and closed a life,



in 1843, chiefly memorable for political pamphlets and the "great dictionary."

Dr. Buckminster was the famous clergyman of Portsmouth, N.H., and the Burrs were an uncle and aunt of Aaron Burr, who lived at Fairfield, Conn.

Dr. Ezra Stiles, the grandfather of Dr. Channing's beloved successor, was one of Eliza's most valued friends. He had been called to the pulpit in Portsmouth, before Buckminster; but he was also called to Yale College, and the ministry unanimously demanded his acceptance of the last call. He was distinguished not only by his learning, but by an earnest sincerity, and a genial, tender charity to all, which his distinguished grandson seemed to have inherited. If people are to be judged by the company they keep, the friends and correspondents of this woman entitle the mysteries of her life to more than common consideration.

Dr. Stiles had married Elizabeth Hubbard, in 1757; and the Betsy Stiles of these letters was his oldest daughter, younger than Eliza, but one of her dearest friends until the hour when she left her home. It was to such friendships as these that her visits to New Haven owed their charm. At the date of these letters, Dr. Stiles seems to have been living in the family of his predecessor at Yale.

Most of the persons mentioned were afterwards members of the famous "Club of Hartford Wits," whose influence was felt throughout the country.

An irregular paper, called "The Anarchiad," was issued from it, to which the persons I have named largely contributed; and its keen satire greatly abridged the reign of misrule which followed the Revolutionary war. It may be thought that I preserve some very trivial paragraphs. I do it in justice to a character much misrepresented, and to show how delicate was the author's playfulness under circumstances which would certainly have betrayed coarseness had it existed. Let it be remembered that these letters represent the era of Clarissa Harlowe and Dorcasina Shelton.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following letters were all written by Eliza Wharton at Hartford, to Joel Barlow at New Haven. She is returning from her visit, and writes first from

"HARTFORD, Feb. 19, 1779.

"You will easily believe me when I tell you that your letter was the most welcome thing imaginable.

"I feared I should have no letters this week when somebody was so good as to call and leave me *five*. Which do you think I read first? You are certainly the paragon of husbands. Were all married men like you, what a happy world for our sex!

"I have been walking half a mile in the mud this evening. I believe you will think that the mud is my element, and that I have a particular delight in it to immerse myself again so soon, when that

contracted on my journey is scarce brushed off. I did not get home till Friday, nor would I have come then, for the roads were intolerable; but I grew impatient for letters. I knew I could not have them where I was, nor could I bear to think of their waiting for me at Hartford. I stayed three or four days at Southington, to rest after my troublesome adventures. There could not be a better place, for to eat and drink is all we have to do! It was a change from New Haven, and all for the worse. Yet the peaceful, unruffled life one leads in such a place has its charms. To rise in the morning and lay your plan for the day, knowing almost to a certainty that nothing will happen to interrupt it; to read and work alternately; then, seek for diversion, some country sport among your family and neighbors; to find yourself quite out of Ambition's way, and in the very bosom of content, — this certainly is agreeable, and never more so than when one has met with trouble in a busier place. I felt myself no longer afraid when a certain subject was started. I neither trembled nor turned pale, but sat at my ease and felt as if nobody would hurt me. I know you will laugh at me for a pusillanimous creature for being ever so afraid as you have seen me; but I cannot help it.

"If Mr. B. is with you, give my kindest love to him. You won't be jealous: that is my foible!

"Thank you for writing at that late hour when you

must have been fatigued with *dissimulation*. Was the question you mention agitated at your meeting? I don't believe there was a clergyman there, or he would have got it determined in a different manner. I wish the ladies would get up a disputing club!

"You are my constant boast among my married acquaintance. Tell my little rogue of a brother that I think he takes too much upon himself in laughing at our connection.

"As to Mr. Baldwin, if he were at the door, I would not run into the cupboard to avoid him. He may mean well, in writing all to Buckminster and nothing to me; but I do not think it.

"You mention in one of your letters, your having been at Mr. Burr's. Why did you not tell me how you liked those good folks, and whether you could divine how they liked you? Make my compliments to all the President's family, not forgetting Dr. Ezra Stiles, to whom I esteem myself under the greatest obligation. Tell Mr. Baldwin that Captain Wooster was told *here* of my having had the small-pox, which he would desire him not to mention, if it is not too late. I hope it will not get much about, for I shall want to go to New Haven again some time. Did you have an agreeable ball last evening? I was there in imagination: did you see any thing of me? I had an invitation, but it was rather too muddy to come in any other way."

“February 22, 1779.

“You may remember we talked of a correspondence of that unreserved kind which you are so happy as to enjoy with Mr. Swift, in which all disguises are thrown off, and you mention every good and ill quality to each other, in the same terms that you consider them in your own souls. I was struck with the advantages which must result if such a correspondence could be maintained without destroying friendship; and I am willing to believe that, in hearts so well regulated as yours, this is possible. Besides, in you the virtues so far prevail that you cannot have much which is disagreeable to hear; but, with the generality of the world, you are sensible this would not do.

“Few, very few, can bear to be told of their faults; and few, very few, will tell them to one's *own* ear. I confess to you, though perhaps you will think it a foolish diffidence, that I am always loath to riske this trial of the friend I love. It would look too much like arrogance in me to pick flaws in my friends, who, as you say, are the worthiest and most amiable people in the world, and too much my superiors to come under my observation. This is written to excuse me from a condition you would have me agree to. Yet I would have you perform your part. Lay aside all partiality for the ‘wife of your talk,’ and tell her what is wrong in her character and conduct. It may happen to you as it did to Mirabel

in the play, who studied the faults of his mistress until they grew so familiar that he could think of them without the least uneasiness, and liked her none the less.

"Pray how does our family of Muses do? I hope you do not keep them in idleness. I know you have other cares, still I wish you to superintend them a little by way of relaxation, and above all things I want you to send me a sample of the work they do, whether great or small.

"Your friend Jacob's poetry has some flat lines in it, which I dare say you observed and could wish you had altered. .

"I have just been reading 'The Prospect of Peace,' which you gave me, but to make it complete it wants the commendatory verses you promised. Pray send them. Have you heard from your 'second wife'? I love her because you do, and wish to hear all about her."

"March 17, 1779.

"I am unspeakably obliged by your last charming packet. I know not how to thank you as I ought; but, could you be sensible of the delight it gave me, you would feel yourself in some measure repaid, for I know that benevolent heart of yours loves to give pleasure. I longed to write you by the post, but was forced to write letters to Boston. Our acquaintance has a claim upon our time. Gratitude and nature forbid us to neglect those with whom we

have spent social hours. Before I go any further I must tell you how sorry I am that you should have been so ill received at Mr. B.'s through a mistake and on my account. I will have that mistake rectified, so say nothing against it. I cannot bear that you should suffer so much for my sake. I cannot conceive where Mrs. B. got her intelligence, or who gave *you* yours. Some meddling or malicious as well as misinformed person gave the first, no doubt. I wish I could repay you and one other friend for the kind part you have taken in it.

"I am exceedingly sorry for Mr. Baldwin's illness. Tell him so: I wish I were near enough to pay back a little of his tender care.

"Do you know, I think my brother improves greatly under your auspices? Let me bespeak your kind attention to him. Form his taste, if you can, to those things you yourself admire, to books and study. Beside the improving, these afford rational amusement to the mind. These are safe pleasures; but oh, what deceitful ones lurk in the world to catch the unwary! My poor boy will be particularly disposed to be led astray by these, unless his friends protect him. He is uncommonly influenced by the company he keeps.

"I want to gratify you, and have searched a great deal for the lines I wrote on P. E.'s death. I gave them to Mr. Dwight, and never took a copy. I

will get them if I can ; but you must not expect to find one of the thousand beauties I admire in yours. I shall be more fond of Shenstone than ever, since he has raised a spirit of emulation in you. Did I ever tell you that I thought your genius and character a little resembled his? — though the first, I believe, has more elevation. May your life be longer and happier than that of the poet of the Leasowes ! If these are your first attempts at elegy, you have succeeded to admiration ; yet I have been trying to find some fault, and perhaps I could, for I read with all the *malice of a friend* ! I hate to send you this rumpled sheet, but Matt threatened to see it, and I almost destroyed it in defending it from him ; and I would not care if I had quite, had I time to write another. Late as it is, I must write to my brother.”

“ March 29, 1779.

“ All that ever I have heard or read of the pleasures and advantages of a married life is nothing to what I have experienced since my connection with you. ’Tis now about three months since we entered that happy state ; and I do not see but it gives me as much joy as at the first moment, and your letters seem to express the same sentiment.

“ Indeed, I believe we are peculiarly fortunate. Some of my friends this way will have it, ’tis only because we are separated that we agree so well,



and say so many soft things to each other; but I am not obliged to believe them, and am sure could they see us together they would alter their opinion. Nay, Rochefoucauld himself would own that our marriage was rather delightful than convenient; but I must leave this charming subject, to make room for the next most agreeable, — poetry. The liberty which you allow me of criticising yours is more flattering than your compliments; and, knowing all apology unnecessary, I shall make use of it.

“There are so many beauties in your elegies, that it looks like envy or ill-nature to pass them and dwell upon the few faults; but you know that I do not leave them unnoticed or unadmired. If you will have me find fault, I can do it in a few instances with the expression. The sentiments are everywhere beautiful, just, and above all criticism. I do not like the word which introduces the first elegy; yet I do not very well know what I would have substituted, or why I dislike it. Perhaps you can tell. From thence to the fourth verse I like entirely; and the last couplet of that is certainly extremely beautiful. In the first the thought is beautiful, but I do not think it happily expressed. The other elegy is my favorite, because of the subject, which you have touched so tenderly that while it melts me into tears it charms. I have made one or two slight alterations in it, too trifling to mention, — only of single words. I must tell you, I have

ventured so far as to give a copy to the mother of the sweet little child, but without your name, and she seemed disposed to give your 'wife' the credit of writing it. I wish she were capable of it. Why are you gloomy? You must not be. Expect every thing, hope every thing, and *do* every thing to make your circumstances agreeable. Tell Mr. B. I am half uneasy that I do not hear from him, and sometimes fear he is offended with me. If it is only because he is taken up with writing Buckminster, I forgive him. Give my kind love to Ruth, and let me know when she returns. What you say of my brother pleases me; but is it possible for him to be steady in any thing that is good? He is a flighty little fellow."

The triviality of the following letter I copy, on account of the allusion to Buckminster:—

"April 15, 1779.

"Your last letter was one of the most agreeable. I began to fear that absence had cooled your affection; that your 'second wife' was returned, or that you had found another; in short, my head was full of a thousand disagreeables: but now I have no room for complaint, and am resolved no idle jealousies shall disturb the uncommon felicity of my lot in you, who are certainly the faithfulest and best of husbands. If you must know who I think you

resemble, or, rather, who you sometimes, by something in your manner, put me in mind of, it is Buckminster.

"I am glad you have at last been sincere with your 'wife.' What you observe is extremely just, — that I do not make a proper difference in my conduct between the worthless and the worthy, — but, trust me, in my heart I make the due distinction. Your 'plan' pleases me extremely. Whether it is romantic or not, I am not as yet able to judge; but I have done nothing but fancy fine things for you ever since I saw it.

"If I were to give the soberest opinion I can frame, I should say the foundation was laid in reason; but your romantic imagination had a little share in the finishing. I long to know what story you will fix upon for a poem of some eminence. It will not do for you much longer only to coquet with the Muses. Pray, why do neither Ruth nor her brother write one word for so long? Tell Betsy Stiles that within a few days she will see some one that I love dearly, and she does not hate. You may expect a little volume of satire upon your life, conversation, and manners, as soon as I can get time and spirits to write it."

"April 29, 1779.

"I have very little time, for I am obliged to steal it from the most agreeable company in the world: I mean my Wethersfield friends, with whom I am

so happy as to be upon a visit for the first time since my return.

"O Joel, to see Samuel bending his course towards New Haven is enough to make me wish to leave even this agreeable place ! I want to hear from you extremely, especially from our dear Muses. Pray send me word how they do, or rather let them speak for themselves on paper. I intended to send you with this a piece which, if you have not read it, will please you. It is called 'The Shipwreck,' not very correct, and written by an unlearned author, but full of native beauties. I have heard one piece of news from New Haven that surprises me ; this is, that our French master, Mons. Beautonaux, is married. If this is so, we may, I presume, take the merit to ourselves ; for nothing but the sight of our uncommon felicity could have wrought such a miracle on the old man ! Pray send me word whom he married, and whether Dr. Stiles married them."

"May 10, 1779.

"I have spent the evening in company before walking half a mile. It is now one o'clock. Judge, then, if I can pretend to find fault with you at present? No, really : I am too tired and too good humored ; but for your encouragement I will tell you that I have a sheet full of hints and sketches in that way which I have taken down when I felt most disposed to be severe, and I intend to work them into a

sort of satire at the first opportunity. I heard last night from Mr. Dwight that he will soon take a journey to camp. He will certainly either go or return by way of New Haven, so you will be able to consult him yourself. I fervently wish you may, for I know of no person so capable of advising you. I shall depend upon seeing you before you set out on your tour."

"June 8, 1779.

"Betsy Stiles is in town: you will easily believe that it gives me a great deal of pleasure to see her; but it makes me wish even more for you, and a few more New Haven friends with whom we used to spend our social evenings. You will see Mr. Dwight before I shall. When I do see him I shall not forget you. I am sorry Swift is 'mad with the world.' You must get his fit over as soon as you can. Come and see him, and you will put us both in good humor. Pray keep your promise and write oftener. I wish there had been a dozen Miss Salmonses, if you would have given each of them a letter."

"July 1, 1779.

"I would not send such worthless letters, if I ever knew of an opportunity half an hour beforehand. We live here, especially in the summer time, a life of pleasurable dissipation, and have so much company that it is almost impossible, how much soever one may think of an absent friend, to steal a moment

for him. I am quite impatient for you to come and see us. I only wait my sister Polly's return to urge it with all the ardor that suits our connection! The poor girl has spent a dull summer at Westbury. We have had a world of good company in her absence, and I am of a mind to reserve some for her at her return. I begin to grow very impatient for some account from Parnassus. You have seen Mr. Dwight, I hope? It is as much as I can do to say I have, he made so short a visit, and his friends were almost ready to pull him to pieces. 'Tis almost a misfortune to be so very good, and so much beloved. Let me hear soon. You should not wait, for you have ten times my leisure."

"October 17, 1779.

"I am extremely pleased with the dependence you put upon my friendship, nor shall it ever disappoint you. I will tell you all I know. Those gentlemen to whom your friends have mentioned your plan approve of it, and say that you shall be encouraged. I wish God would give some of them a heart to do all that you want, or rather I wish he would give some of us who have hearts the means. I must own to you, dear Joel, that I have no great expectation that those to whom the affair has been mentioned will do any thing effectual about it. I have had much conversation with Webster, and he is still sanguine. He will write you all his thoughts, and desire you

to stay in New Haven, until he can tell you with certainty what to depend upon. In this I join him, as in a short time he will probably be able to inform you. Let me beg of you, dear friend, not to be discouraged with regard to your design, though it should not proceed at this time, and above all things not to give yourself any uneasiness about what your friends have attempted. If it should not succeed, it cannot possibly be of any disadvantage to you that I can think of. Your friends will be proud to avow that it originated with them. It has at least made you known to some worthy men, who will wish you well, and probably do you service, if not in the way and at the time I wish.

"Yet I feel for your delicacy, which is wounded by the idea you entertain of the matter. Be assured I have not mentioned it to any mortal, nor shall I; and I believe Webster has mentioned it only to those he thought might be of service. How far they may mention it, it is impossible to say; but I beg you would give yourself no trouble about it.

"And now, let me entreat you, once more, not to be dejected on any account. 'Tis true you are in a disagreeable situation, but it will be mended soon. Fortune owes you much, and she will pay you. You are placed at the bottom of the wheel, and every change must be for the better. You have every thing to hope and nothing to fear. I know that you despise the favors of Fortune, except so far as they are

necessary to the prosecution of your noble and beneficent designs. I know your soul is as superior to the sordid love of wealth as your genius is to that of the generality of men. All I wish for you is a decent independence that will enable you to gratify your favorite inclinations. If those who *can* help you to this *will* not, you must help yourself; for you will certainly meet with assistance. Keep up your spirits, and be certain of the constant affection of your friends. In me you will always find a true one, as I will show you by more than words."

The above letter speaks for itself. Barlow had been shaping the "Columbiad" all through the war. It is probable that the poem owed its final name to Dr. Dwight, who is said to have been the first to call America "Columbia." It seems that Eliza and his friends Webster and Watson had made a movement in Hartford toward a subscription in behalf of its publication, which alarmed Barlow's delicacy. But there was every reason why Barlow's plans should be entitled to the sympathy of the whole State. As chaplain and soldier, — especially at White Plains, — his sermons and his songs had done much to keep up the spirits of the soldiers.

Eliza's strong practical sense shows to great advantage in this letter; so also does her womanly sweetness. The subject is continued: —



“ November, 1779.

“What time I have, I steal from our dear Northampton friends. Mr. and Mrs. Dwight, Sally, and Mrs. Storrs speak of you with a great deal of affection, and hoped to have met you here.

“I am sorry that I cannot now inform you with respect to Colonel Broom. I will take the earliest opportunity, but it might not be proper to mention it just at present, as the family are overwhelmed with affliction at the loss of a dear sister. The use you make of that melancholy event is just and rational. I always feel that the loss of one friend binds the rest closer to my heart. I am sorry for Ruthe’s misfortune. Tell her that I love her, and will write by the first opportunity. I find at last your long-sought letter from Mr. Baldwin. Mr. Dwight found it at Northampton, and brought it here. I hope it will make some amends for your disappointment in not seeing him. Providence will throw something in your way before long. I have very little expectation of your coming to Colonel Broom, because his children are so young. I can hardly think he wants an instructor. If he should, I believe you would be acceptable to him, and have no doubt the place would suit you.”

“ December 18, 1779.

“I thought you were not in quite good spirits when you wrote last. It has not come to that yet,

that the world has nothing for you to do. Besides, your friends will always want you. One of those on whom you had the least dependence has found an employment for you that I think will be agreeable. This is Mr. Dwight. His school is like to proceed; and with him I think you must be happy, and will have some advantages for study that you can have nowhere else. Watson will write you more about the matter. I am much pleased with having you settled at Northampton, at least for a time. What an excellent man is our friend! I never think of him, but with gratitude to heaven for having made him so worthy and so amiable.

"I have just been reading a pretty observation in the 'Guardian,' which I apply to him, —

"'It is a tribute which ought to be paid to Providence by men of distinguished faculties to praise and adore the Author of their being with a spirit suitable to those faculties, and so rouse slower men to a participation in their transports.'

"Thus does our admirable friend. It is almost impossible for any one to be in his company, and not grow wiser and better. Does not this storm make you think of one we had last Christmas? How do the Muses? I intend to send them some work soon. I have a song of which the tune is excellent and the words poor, the subject a parting between two lovers. What could be better? I will send you a copy, and if you will let Quammeny

take it, and work it into a more eligible form, I shall be much obliged. In all moods and tenses, I am

"Yours."

Barlow here makes a visit to Hartford.

"December 28, 1779.

"I had no opportunity for conversation when you were here. It was literally *seeing* you. So I know nothing of the situation of your mind or your prospects. I was happy to see you in better spirits. You have much to hope, and I, who am never sanguine, think you have at present good reason to hope almost all you can wish. Enclosed is the song. I will get the tune, which is a fine one, pricked, and send it. Webster was here the afternoon you left, and sorry he could not see you. Pray keep Quammeny in employ. Watson is afraid she will freeze in spite of all he has done for her. I intend to slip down and see what she is about."

From this allusion to Watson, it is probable that some money was raised for Barlow in Hartford.

Between this letter of December 28, and the next of February 25, Eliza seems to have gone to New Haven. The spelling of these letters is perfectly modern. One or two peculiarities or slips of the pen — such as "coppo," "riske," "Ruthe," "spight" — I have carefully preserved.

“February 25, 1780.

“This is just to inform you that I am not in Boston. I don’t choose that the report of my being there should deprive me of letters. I wish to keep up a constant correspondence, and shall write such stuff as I have, and expect in return the ‘wit of the Muses.’ Is not this a modest bargain I make with you? But sometimes by luck or study I write better than this. I hear little from you this winter, but will not complain, for I presume you are employed in taking care of the family. However, there was a time when no cares would have made you so long unmindful of your *dearest*, I mean *one* of your *dearest* ‘wives;’ but we have been married more than a year, and, if we are not quite so attentive to each other as at first, few of our contemporaries will be able to reproach us. If this letter is not quite as good as it should be, I do not much care, for you have got a fine long one from Mr. Lyman. So I judge by the outside, which I assure you is all I have seen. I wish I were with you, to help you read it. I had a good mind to have made use of the privileges of a wife and opened it, so great was my desire to see the production of so fine a pen. Pray what has Quammeny done with my song? If she has not finished it, she is an idle hussy, and I beg you will set her immediately about it. I am sure that her sisters would rather she should do their work over after them than be idle, for they are all spinsters.”

“ May 12, 1781.

“ I heard from you by Mr. Levengsworth, but why did you let him come without a letter? Give my love to Ruthe, and tell her that I do try to be as generous as possible, and do not begrudge you to her but a little. I will write the dear girl by the very first opportunity. You enquire about Mr. Dwight. He will be in New Haven next week.”

The letters close with the following to Mrs. Barlow. The benevolence, cheerfulness, activity, and practical sense they indicate, written just before and after Buckminster's marriage, are in strange contrast to the half-insane despair and moody regret usually attributed to her at this period : —

“ Hartford, Nov. 25, 1782.

“ MY DEAR RUTHE, — I thank you a thousand times for your letter and the agreeable news it contains. Will we admit you, do you ask, into this excellent town of Hartford? Yes, with as much pleasure as a lawyer his client, or a lady her lover; and rather than you should not have room, I should be willing to turn out several that I know of, notwithstanding that I always thought myself very public-spirited, and know that the riches of a community consists in the number of its inhabitants.

“ But I hope that we need not impoverish ourselves on your account, but that you will add to our strength

and riches by coming amongst us ; for Goodrich has, I suppose, — as perhaps he wrote you word, — by this time secured you a very good place. I believe it will be in Trumbull's neighborhood, but when I last saw Goodrich he was not quite certain.

"As to what you tell of your poverty, I am glad of it with all my heart, for many reasons. I believe I shall not mention more than three or four, and leave the rest to some other opportunity.

"In the first place, then, I love you so well as to be willing to share almost any fortune with you, and we are poor, and always have been so, and are contriving to become still more poor if we can. In this we are no way singular. Most of the people of merit that we have ever known or heard of, are or were so before us. I do not mean to imply that because we are poor we must absolutely be people of merit, but I think, as the world goes, the sign is very much in our favor. Then as for poets and men of genius, with whom you have a right to class your husband, they have always been poor from time immemorial. I need not mention Homer, the prince of them, who sung his epic poem about the streets, nor a thousand others, whose history I dare say you have at your tongue's end. For my part, I am apt to imagine poverty to be a peculiar mark of the favor of Heaven, as the ancients used to esteem it to be struck by lightning. I only wish, my dear, that you were half as well convinced of its

blessings and advantages as I am. You would then be perfectly contented if it should be your lot, — which, however, you are by no means certain of, unless you take great pains to deserve it.

“Polly is in a great hurry with some work, and therefore the agreeable task of writing for both devolves upon me. I do not doubt she will set her hand to all I have said or can say about poverty. I am heartily glad to hear, my dear friend, that you are treated at home with kindness and attention; not that I by any means think that enough for so deserving a child as you have ever been; but I could not bear, as I have sometimes told you, to have you on other than friendly terms with your own father. I can’t but hope he will yet do you justice some time or other; and I think we ought to suffer any thing but absolute slavery from so revered a character, rather than show resentment.

“The walking has been so extremely bad that I have been able to make but little inquiry about crockery. There is, I believe, considerable queen’s-ware in town. I am not certain about china. I will look for this, and let you know as soon as possible. I believe such things are not less high here than in New Haven; but then you would save the trouble of bringing them. Pray give my love to Joel, if he is returned. Mr. Wadsworth sends his to you, and thanks you for remembering him when you were at Ridgefield. Mamma, Abby, every-

body, send love to you, and wish to see you. You see, my dear, I have no less propensity to write long letters than you have. Don't you think it is the sign of a fertile genius? But I must bid you adieu, for the present.

“E. W.”

These letters are Eliza Wharton's appeal to posterity,—to a world which has misjudged her.

They were written by a light-hearted and fanciful, as well as by a cultivated, woman, but neither by a wanton nor a “coquette.”





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